Meeting Responsivity
Reference Manual for Correctional Program Officers (CPOs) Delivering Programs to Offenders with Special Needs within CSC

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2012
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Learning disabilities, attention deficits, and language barriers can be a challenge not only for the individual with the deficit, but also for Correctional Programs Offices (CPOs). These challenges can be very frustrating for all involved in the learning process if special considerations and modifications are not made in the way lessons are being delivered.

This manual has been designed to assist CPOs’ who are faced with having to deliver a program to offenders who may have special needs requiring a modification or change to the existing program delivery structure. With information acquired from the CSC Responsivity Portal and input from CPOs currently working within various institutions within CSC, this manual will provide suggestions and techniques useful in meeting these special needs while still maintaining the basis of the existing program delivery content.
Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
What is ADHD?


Characteristics of ADHD in Adults:

- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble focusing or hyperfocusing on things he/she finds interesting
- Disorganized
- Forgetful
- Impulsive
- Problems with emotional regulation
- Hyperactivity/restlessness

Classroom Management

- **Create group guidelines** and post them in a highly visual place.

  ➢ **TIP:** Have your group create the rules themselves, making them simple and concrete. Try to frame them in a positive way, by focusing on what to DO, not what not to do. Refer to these rules often, as required.

- **Structure your lesson.** Have a set routine and order to your lessons.

- **Try a (token) reward system** – extrinsic rewards can work wonders in motivating offenders to work towards goals and often wind up internalized. For offenders with ADHD they can also help link behaviour with its consequences.

  ✓ **Minimize distractions** – this means clutter, too many posters on the wall, and noise.

  ✓ **Use proximity control** – be aware of where you are relative to your participants should you need to regain their attention.
✓ **Get them involved and moving.** Offenders with ADHD often have difficulty sitting still and focusing for prolonged periods of time. When you notice them starting to “drift,” try some of the following:
- Have them flipchart, hang posters on the wall, or distribute handouts.
- Incorporate group exercises and small group work to mix things up.

✓ **Praise small successes.**

**Attention/Concentration**

✓ **Minimize distractions** in the room
  - Keep the room organized and neat.
  - Hang all posters and wall charts at the back of the room, behind where the participant is seated.
  - Seat the individual away from the window or other noisy areas (e.g., the hallway).
  - If you have a choice, select a classroom in a quieter area – be mindful of the level of noise and traffic in the hallway.
  - Minimize talking amongst participants while you’re speaking – only allow one person to talk at a time.

✓ **Briefly state the goal** of the lesson to focus their attention in that direction before beginning.

✓ **Have a flipchart posted outlining the key session segments** – show the order of the session and check off as you cover topics.

✓ **Use visual attention getters** – diagrams, pictures, posters, objects.

✓ **Regain focus** by calling them by name or standing near them.

✓ **Vary the volume** and tone of your voice.

✓ **Call their attention to important information** by saying “this is VERY important” or “you’ll probably want to write this down.”

✓ **Keep instructions and directions short**, simple and direct. Don’t give too many directions at once.
✓ **Don’t distribute handouts before you’re ready** to use them – they’ll be working on them as you speak.

✓ Ensure that handouts and overheads are not overly distracting.

✓ **Get them moving.** Have them flipchart, take a 5 minute stretching break, etc.

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**Memory**

✓ **Repeat material** and practice new skills. Offenders with ADHD have a tendency to “tune out” once distracted or when they start to get bored. As a result, repetition of material will maximize the chances that they will catch important points. Consider:
  - Reviewing important material covered in the previous session at the beginning of the next session.
  - Allowing time for a recap of important teaching points at the end of each session – try making it fun so they’re more likely to remember. Games almost always work because they motivate them to do their best.

✓ **Break material down** into shorter segments. Avoid lengthy instructions, sentences and explanations.

✓ **Make things memorable by using visual aids** whenever possible – many adults with ADHD learn best when material is visual. Pictures, drawings, cue cards, post-it notes, lists and videos can all serve as excellent teaching tools. Here are some examples:
  - Using a picture to convey what is being said when teaching core concepts or skills. A good example is the Green, Yellow, Red (GYR) tool we use to teach self-monitoring in Programs. Drawing a traffic light conveys this concept in a clear, understandable manner (Appendix A).
  - Providing both written and verbal directions and explanations when giving instructions.
  - Using coloured marker to highlight important words when flip charting.

✓ **Use as many sense modalities** as possible – sight, smell, touch, and hearing.

✓ **Use acronyms** - acronyms and other memory tricks (e.g., mnemonics) can be useful with this group. They should represent simple, condensed ways to remember things. You can even encourage them to try to come up with their own memory aids to remember
material.

✓ **Make the information relevant** to them – relating material to their own lives makes material more meaningful and likely to be remembered.

✓ **Simplify the material** – use simple language, short sentences, and speak clearly. Watch your pace.

✓ **Rely heavily on to-do lists and calendars** for remembering tasks.

## Assignments/Handouts

✓ **Reduce and/or enlarge** the amount of material on one page.

✓ **Minimize distractions** – avoid having a lot of pictures or colours.

✓ **Design worksheets with white space.**

✓ **Colour code** important worksheets or handouts so they are easy to locate when needed – color coding worksheets frequently is a simple and effective way of minimizing the time spent shuffling through binders to find what you’ve asked for.

> **Tip:** photocopy their Self Management Plan on light blue paper, putting all of the integrated skills (FOCUS, CPR, SMART, GYR, etc.) on light green paper, and putting all of the social skills on light orange paper.

✓ **Underline, highlight or make BOLD important words** or points.

✓ **Give them extra time** to complete tasks.

## Activity Level

✓ **Remove unnecessary items from work area.**

> Participants who tend to distract themselves and others by fiddling with objects behave better when their work area is uncluttered. Remove (or direct the individual
to put away) any items that they don’t need for the program or assignment but might be tempted to play with (e.g., extra pens, paper clips)

✓ **Get them moving.**
  - Participants with high energy levels are more likely to engage in distracting behaviour when they’re forced to sit through long periods of lecture or independent seatwork.
  - Instead, offer frequent opportunities for movement by designing instruction to actively engage them as learners: ask questions, have them flipchart or distribute handouts, incorporate role plays, or try putting a pop-quiz into a game format.

✓ **Incorporate kinesiology breaks.**
  - These exercise breaks give participants the opportunity to move and get their blood flowing again. These should be done between assignments and after extended periods of seat work (a general rule is once every hour). While they don’t need to be long in duration, they can provide the learner with a renewed energy to focus once some of the physical energy has been released.

✓ **Consider letting the individual stand while working.**

✓ **Provide a ‘stress ball’ or other quiet squishy toys.**
  - Many adults with ADHD need to have their hands moving. If the individual distracts other participants by fiddling with objects, substitute an alternative motor behaviour that will not distract others. Give the participant a soft ‘stress ball’ (or leave several in a basket on a table for them to grab) and encourage the individual to squeeze it whenever he or she feels the need for motor movement.

✓ **Let them doodle.**
  - Similar to providing stress balls, letting participants doodle can actually help them focus better and assist with information processing.
  - However, given that they will be looking down more while doodling, (and therefore unable to read your non-verbal cues), when you reach an important point, make sure to draw their attention to it by saying something like “this is VERY important” or “you might want to right this down.” This will regain their attention and ensure that, if they did drift off, they’re back on track.

✓ **Agree on a ‘silent signal’ to address disruptive behaviours** in a low-key manner.
  - Meet privately with the individual and identify for the participant the motor or verbal behaviours that appear to be most distracting. With the participant’s help, select a silent signal that you can use to alert the individual that his or her behaviour has
crossed the threshold and is now distracting to others. You may want to role-play one or two scenarios with the individual in which you use the silent signal and the student then controls the problem behaviour.

- Be sure to praise them privately when they respond appropriately to the signal.

- **If they rush through their work, prompt them to re-check** it before submitting.

- **If their behaviour becomes disruptive, remind them of the group guidelines** (rules) and speak to them privately after class.

### Impulse Control

- **Seat them near the front** of the room so you can get their attention easily if needed.

- **Remind them of the Group Guidelines**.

- **Role model appropriate behaviour** (e.g., waiting one’s turn to speak) and identify it in a group setting.

- **Encourage the use of self-monitoring techniques** - Offenders with ADHD will often require assistance learning to self-monitor their level of emotional arousal, when they’re becoming distracted, and when they’re going to act without thinking.
  - **TIP for self-monitoring emotional arousal**: Many offenders like the Green-Yellow-Red (GYR) tool because it’s visual, simple, and easy to remember (Appendix A).
  - **TIP for self-monitoring distraction**: To help adults with ADHD get a sense of how long it generally takes them before becoming distracted, it can be helpful for them to time how long it takes on a task before they start to lose focus. Homework tasks can then be structured with this in mind as can tests.
  - **TIP for impulse control surrounding distractibility**: Try having the individual use what’s called a distractibility delay technique. Here the individual writes down distractions when they emerge rather than act on them, and then return to the task at hand.

- **Teach strategies to slow down thought processes**.
  - **STOP and THINK** is a tool used in Correctional Programs where offenders are taught to STOP and THINK before making decisions and before acting. Here the
individual STOPS what they’re doing (takes a “TIME OUT”) and THINKS about the consequences of his or her intended behaviour before proceeding.

- Taking this a step further, it may even be beneficial to have offenders with ADHD follow the STOP-THINK-TALK-DO rule, where they actually SAY or verbalize to themselves or others what they will do, before they DO the chosen behaviour.

✓ **Train them in guided self-talk** (aka self-instruction).
  - Self-talk can be used for a number of purposes, including:
    - Reinforcement
    - Going through the steps in a task
    - Simple self-reminders
  - Using guided self-talk can help the individual focus on each element of the task at hand and increase the likelihood of achieving the desired outcome.

✓ **Give positive reinforcement and praise successes.**

### Problem-Solving

✓ **Help the individual identify when a problem exists** and what the problem is.

✓ **Teach them skilled vs. automatic thinking** – this means taking a TIME OUT to STOP, get their emotions in check, and THINK before acting.

✓ **Use and practice problem-solving using the FOCUS model** often.

✓ **Write the FOCUS steps on a flipchart one at a time** so they can follow along. Role play or discuss and apply the steps to problems they’re likely to encounter.

✓ **Give the participant a pocket-sized card** with the FOCUS steps written out in simple terms. They can carry this with them when they need a reminder of what they need to do (Appendix B).

### Organization & Time Management

✓ **Provide a highly structured environment and tasks.**
  - Have a predictable routine so they know what to expect.
  - Provide an outline of the key points covered (in the order they’re covered) to help them follow along and take notes. Make them simple, clear and concise. Point form
or numbered steps (1, 2, 3) are often helpful.

✓ **Provide binders** for handouts and assignments.

✓ **Have them date all work, number pages** and place them in chronological order.

✓ **Colour code important handouts**.

✓ **Supply calendars or day planners** that can be inserted into their binder or taped on the front. They should include important dates (e.g., session days/time, make-up sessions, when assignments are due), and any changes in routine (Appendix C).

✓ **Break down difficult or larger tasks** into smaller tasks.

✓ **Develop checklists or tracking sheets** so that they can follow their own progress.
  ➢ **TIP**: It can be useful to create checklists for assignments that need to be broken down into more manageable (smaller) chunks. Breaking the task down makes it seem less daunting and, by checking off each step as it’s completed, small accomplishments are being reinforced.

✓ **Remind offenders of assignment due dates**.

✓ **Use “sticky” notes** to mark important pages.

✓ **Help them prioritize** material by saying: “This is the most important part of this assignment/ lesson.”

✓ Get the participant to **highlight or underline** important parts of readings or handouts.
# Time Management 101: Simple Tricks to Time Management

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| ✓ Adults with ADHD may easily lose track of time or miss deadlines all too often. | ➢ Get them to post deadline reminders in highly visible places.  
➢ Get them in the habit of using checklists, calendars, and day-planners. |
| ✓ They may procrastinate, underestimate the time needed for tasks, or do things in the wrong order. | ➢ Have them overestimate the time it takes to complete tasks – double or triple the amount of time expected to complete the task and have them plan accordingly.  
➢ Have them break large tasks into pieces, adding extra time to complete each section. They should write a list of all of the mini-tasks and check them off as they complete them. |
| ✓ Many spend so much time on one thing (hyper-focusing) that nothing else gets done.  
✓ Adults with ADHD often have a different sense of how time passes. | ➢ Get them to become clock-watchers so they get used to how time passes. Try having them time themselves on tasks, or set reminders to go off every 10, 15 or 30 minutes (as appropriate) when working on a task – have them orient themselves in terms of what time it is, how much they’ve accomplished, and how much they have left to do in the time remaining. |
Social Skills

Improve Communication:

✓ **Teach active listening** – this involves showing another person they’re listening by maintaining eye contact, nodding their head to convey interest, and waiting their turn to speak. A neat trick if they find their mind wandering is to have them mentally repeat the other person’s words to help them follow the conversation better. Have them practice this skill often.

✓ **Highlight the importance of asking questions** – it’s a good way of conveying interest and will make the person speaking feel attended to and appreciated.

  - Rather than blurting out something random that’s on their mind, encourage them to ask the person they’re talking to a question about what they said. If their mind begins to drift it is also perfectly fine to ask the person speaking to repeat what was just said. Not only do they get to hear what was said again, but asking also lets the other person know that they care.

✓ **Encourage thinking before speaking.**

  - Many adults with ADHD have a tendency to say something before thinking it through. Some may also talk too much and monopolize conversations, take too long to get to their point, or cut off and interrupt others.
  - Much like impulse control, encourage them to STOP and THINK before speaking – have them take a couple of deep breaths, collect their thoughts so they know what they’re going to say before speaking, and consider how what will be said will be perceived by others.

✓ **Have them write down what they want to say instead of interrupting.**

  - Have them keep a small pad of paper where they can write down what they are thinking and want to say. If another person is talking and they feel the urge to interrupt, rather than blurting out what they’re thinking, they can write it down instead.

✓ **Minimize distractions** – if it’s too noisy they may have difficulty concentrating on what is being said.
General Classroom Etiquette:

✓ **If language is inappropriate**, repeat what was said in a socially appropriate manner.

✓ **Provide immediate and direct feedback** on social behaviour.

✓ **Role model** appropriate behaviour.

✓ **Give positive reinforcement** and praise successes.

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Emotions Management

✓ **Identify common triggers** – Have the individual make a list of their common triggers for the emotion they’re having difficulties managing. Becoming more aware of these triggers will help them more effectively stop their level or arousal from getting out of control, regardless of the emotion.

  ➢ **TIP:** Make them aware of the environmental factors that can interfere with self-control, such as fatigue, hunger, stimulation overload, and not enough physical activity.

✓ **Identify cues for increasing arousal.**

  ➢ It’s important that the individual become aware of the physical signs of anger as well as the thought processes that go along with them. Typically, the physical aspects will be the easiest to identify because their thoughts are often racing.

  ```
  Common physical anger cues include: clenched jaw, heart beating faster, sweaty palms, burning ears, face gets hot, and breathing gets quicker and shallower. When they feel these reactions in their body, they should signal that it’s time to take a step away from the situation and decompress.
  ```

✓ **Help them develop effective coping strategies** – role play and practice often.

  ➢ To get them to decompress: The 1st line of defense when emotions run high is typically a TIME OUT. Taking slow, deep breaths; counting to 10; or using simple self-talk statements like “it’s not worth it,” “calm,” or “it’s all good,” are other strategies that many offenders find useful.
✓ Provide consistent feedback and positive reinforcement.

✓ Redirect participant away from source of frustration.

✓ Allow the individual to leave the room to regroup.

✓ Anticipate those activities that trigger frustration and restructure them for success.

✓ Provide a quiet environment free of distraction.

✓ Agree on a signal that the individual can give to let you know they’re frustrated.

✓ Develop a cuing system – verbal or gestures – that will redirect the participant.

✓ Recognize positive behaviour and responses.

Other Resources

Helpguide.org
http://helpguide.org/mental/adhd_add_adult_symptoms.htm

ADDitude – Living Well with Attention Deficit
http://www.additudemag.com/resources/printables.html#AdultADD

LD Online
http://www.ldonline.org/adhdbasics

Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC)

ADHD Canada
http://www.adhdcanada.com/

The content of this chapter can be viewed in its entirety and unmodified by visiting the CSC

Responsivity Portal at:

http://infonet/SoloSites/ResponsivityPortal/home.htm?lang=en
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)?

FASD is considered a “spectrum” disorder related to the Central Nervous System (CNS) damage incurred by a fetus which has been exposed to alcohol. Although damage to the CNS can range from mild to severe, deficits in cognitive, emotional and social functioning are common across the ranges.

Characteristics of FASD

- Memory impairment
- Poor impulse control
- Poor judgement
- Impaired motor skills
- Attention problems

General Tips for FASD

- **Reduce sensory overload** – maintain an organized, clutter-free classroom. Remove distractions.
- **Use concrete and simple language.** Avoid idioms and make abstract concepts concrete.
- **Ensure your program is highly structured** – same seats, predictable session format, set routine. Prepare them ahead of time for any changes that may arise.
- **Start each session, and segment within the session, with the main idea or heading.** Many people are visual, write it down and say it.
- **Have them focus their attention** on important points by emphasizing “This is VERY important.” Change the volume & tone of your voice for emphasis.
- **Help the participant to think through the steps** when completing a task.
✓ **Check for recall & understanding** by asking them to paraphrase. Make sure they’re not just parroting back what you’ve said.

✓ **Give clear & concrete directions** – pair with visual cues whenever possible.

✓ **Vary presentation style** – include as many sense modalities as possible.

✓ **Be honest but liberal with praise.**

✓ **Reduce the amount of printed or written work.**

✓ **Be specific, consistent and systematic in expectations and actions.**

✓ **Emphasize quality of ideas and perseverance in written work** rather than spelling and handwriting.

✓ **Provide SUPPORT not punishment:** They will be late for group and will forget (or not complete) assignments - but it’s not intentional. Support them by providing more reminders or encouraging a buddy system.

### Classroom Management

✓ **Post rules in a highly visual place** and refer to them often. These rules should be simple, focusing on what to DO, not what not to do.

✓ **Set a structure and routine to your program and stick to it.** They respond best when they know what to expect. If FASD offenders work in a stable environment with few changes, they are more likely to succeed and respond to the program.

✓ **Be consistent** – use consistent rules and directions to improve comprehension, especially since they have difficulty generalizing information from one situation to another.

✓ **Use a token system of rewards** to link behaviour with its consequences.

✓ **Remain calm and in control at all times.**

✓ **Be firm, but flexible and supportive.**
✓ **Use proximity control** – be aware of where you are relative to your participants.

✓ **Use voice control** – regulated soft tones work well.

✓ **Plan for transition times** and prepare participants for these and other changes that may interrupt their routine. For example, use a calendar so they know what’s coming up each day.

✓ **Be proactive** – take steps to create an inclusive environment ahead of time.

**Memory**

✓ **Repeat material** – provide opportunities to practice, role model and over-learn skills.
  ➢ Review material covered during the previous session at the beginning of each new session.
  ➢ Repeat information and instructions during each session.
  ➢ Allow time for a recap at the end of each session.

✓ **Break material down** into shorter segments, whether you’re writing on the flipchart or presenting orally. Avoid long sentences and explanations.

✓ **Use visual aids** whenever possible – offenders with FASD learn best when material is presented visually. You can also use visual aids to prompt memory of specific tasks, events or concepts. Think: pictures, drawings, cue cards, post-it notes, lists.

✓ **Use as many sense modalities as possible** - sight, smell, touch and hearing.
  ➢ Use visual attention getters, such as diagrams, posters, objects, and colour.
  ➢ Give verbal directions to accompany demonstrations.
  ➢ Give written directions to accompany verbal instructions.

✓ **Use acronyms**.
  ➢ Some acronyms that can be related to real life (e.g., CPR for challenging thinking) they actually like (Appendix D). Others may need to be provided on cue cards they can pull out in order to facilitate recall (e.g., FOCUS for problem solving – see Appendix B).

✓ **Make the information relevant to them** – relate it to their personal lives to make it meaningful and less “foreign.”
Meeting Responsivity

Language & Comprehension

Difficulties with Receptive Language

- **Simplify the material being taught** - use simple language, short sentences, and speak clearly and slowly. You will need to give them more time to process what you’re saying and to ask questions if necessary.
  - Ask them: “How do you remember what you need to?” and reinforce their own memory aids.

- **Reduce distractions** – seat them near the front of the room, only allow one person to talk at once, and minimize outside noise.

- **Use clear and simple language** – use simple words, short sentences, be direct and to the point.
  - See: “How to Make your Speech (and Written Material) Easy to Understand” (Appendix E).

- **Be concrete.**
  - Demonstrate what you mean rather than just giving verbal directions. Relate new information verbally, but also show a picture or drawing, or act out what you mean (this can help with some of the more abstract program concepts, as well as when a word has more than one meaning).
  - In addition to showing the picture or acting out what you mean yourself, provide hands-on materials and opportunities for the individual to try things out.

**Rule of Thumb**: seeing is better than hearing and doing is better than just seeing. (This is a good rule to follow when working with offenders with any type of cognitive impairment).

- **Speak slower and leave pauses** – they will need more time to process information. Watch the pace of each session and beware of falling into the trap of trying to keep pace with the “talkers”.

- **Emphasize key points** – what are one or two key points you want to be the “take home” message(s) of the session? Be sure to repeat these throughout the session and during wrap-up. Try placing emphasis on key points by varying the tone of your voice.
✓ Face the individual when speaking – they will often read non-verbal cues.

✓ Use voice control - regulated soft tones work well.

✓ Use body language, facial expression and eye contact to convey mood and feelings.

✓ Summarize and repeat information often. Check for understanding often (Appendix F).

Difficulties with Expressive Language (Communication)

✓ Allow adequate time for responses – they may take more time to process what’s being said and to formulate a response.

✓ You may need to explore their question with them to uncover what it is they’re concerned about or are asking.
  ➢ Guide them in their responses by providing structure – You can do this by asking ‘who,’ ‘what,’ ‘where,’ ‘when,’ and ‘how’ questions – avoid asking ‘why’ questions as these involve inferential thinking, which individuals with FASD struggle with.

✓ Give cues that you are expecting a response, such as saying their name or using a gesture.

✓ Pay attention to non-verbal cues – Turn to face the individual if your back is toward them when they’re speaking as they could be providing non-verbal cues in their responses to assist with communication (e.g., pointing at a poster in the room).

✓ Don’t pretend to understand what they’re saying if you don’t.
  ➢ Ask specific questions to fill in the gaps.
  ➢ Verify the message by repeating or rephrasing.
  ➢ If you still can’t understand: be honest, show respect for the person and acknowledge the importance of their message by apologizing for failing to understand them (e.g., “I’m sorry, I’m not understanding what you’re telling me”).

Reading

✓ Always read handouts, overheads, or any printed work to them.

✓ Don’t overwhelm the individual with multiple complex instructions – use point form, short sentences and easy-to-understand language.
✓ **Enlarge material on the page** - use large writing on whiteboards and flipcharts.

✓ **Have fewer questions** on a page.

✓ **Minimize noise** as much as possible when they’re reading/working on assignments.

✓ **Provide reading aids**, such as colour overlays and ear plugs to block out extraneous noise (colour overlays are sheets of coloured plastic film suitable for placing over a page of text when reading. They will help the letters stand out better on a page when reading and assist with reading fluency).

✓ **Give them cue cards with “windows”** (a rectangular shape) cut out of the center to focus their attention on only a few words or sentences at a time.

  ➢ Other easy alternatives: have them **use a ruler or piece of paper** to cover everything except what's being read at that moment.

✓ **Allow extra time to read** assignments and handouts. Also, don’t call on them to read in group if they’re not comfortable (ask their preference outside of group).

✓ Make handouts and other support materials (flipcharts, overheads, etc.) clear and easy-to-read.

**Writing**

✓ **Let them use point-form** when completing handouts and homework.

✓ **Ignore bad grammar and spelling** – look for understanding of program material.

✓ **Allow opportunities to clarify** what they wrote without being penalized.

✓ **If they’re stronger verbally, test understanding verbally.**
Information Processing

✓ **Allow extra time to answer** verbally (give them time to process the information).

✓ **Slow down** – don’t speak or move through the lesson too quickly. Leave pauses for the individual to process your words after each sentence.

✓ **Speak clearly and simply** – avoid complicated language, long sentences, abstractions and idioms. Present information in small chunks.
  ➢ See:
    o “How to Make your Speech (and Written Material) Easy to Understand” (Appendix E).
    o “How to Make Print Material Easy to Read” (Appendix G).
    o “How to Check for Understanding” (Appendix F).

✓ **Provide an outline** of the lesson so they know what to expect.

✓ **Phrase questions to give them a choice of answers** (a, b, c format) – this can assist with recall and reduce the time required for processing.

✓ **Avoid asking too many** questions.

✓ **Reduce distractions**.

✓ **Allow extra time for in-class assignments and quizzes**.

✓ **Modify assignments** and quizzes.
Improving Judgement

✓ **Post Group Guidelines/Class Rules** – establish specific rules for expected behaviour in clear and simple language.

✓ **Discuss appropriate social conduct** – boundaries, topics to be shared in group, language.

✓ **Use immediate reinforcement** to link the behaviour with its consequences.

✓ **Model and role play expected behaviour** – show them what being a good listener and taking turns talking look like by doing both yourself. Remember that offenders with IDs will often learn by seeing what others do.

✓ **Use STOP and THINK often.** Get them in the habit of stopping what they’re doing before they make a decision. Have them think about what they want to do and possible consequences of the action.

✓ **Use a token economy system** to link behaviour to consequences

Reasoning & Abstract Thinking

✓ **Explain concepts and skills in very CONCRETE terms.**
  ➢ **Demonstrate what you mean** rather than just giving verbal directions. Relate new information verbally, but also show a picture or drawing, demonstrate the concept.
  ➢ In addition to showing the picture or demonstrating, provide hands-on materials and opportunities for the individual to try things.

✓ **Speak plainly** – use very simple terms and avoid unnecessary jargon or slang.

✓ **Monitor comprehension** – Ask “what did you learn today?” during wrap-up or after each section.

✓ **Relate or link abstract concepts to personal experiences** whenever possible.
✓ Be prepared to spend extra one-on-one time going through more difficult concepts. Go through exercises step-by-step.

Problem-Solving

✓ Help the individual identify when a problem exists and what the problem is.

✓ Try using visual aids or props to help them remember what they need to do in response to a problem.
  ➢ Explain that the FOCUS model is like binoculars in that it helps you FOCUS on a problem so you can work to solve it (Appendix B).
  ➢ Use a picture of a traffic light to prompt problem-solving in response to stress or when their emotions are running high. This takes the guess-work (memory) out in that they’ll know that they need to stop and problem-solve.

✓ Take them through each of the steps involved in problem-solving as a group

✓ Write the steps on a flipchart one at a time so they can follow along.

✓ Go through problem situations they’ve encountered or are likely to encounter – generate solutions and practice using role plays.

✓ Provide a lot of opportunities to practice until responses become automatic.

✓ Assign another participant to assist.

✓ Give the participant a cue card with the FOCUS steps written out in simple terms (Appendix B).

✓ Repeatedly ask: “How does this apply to your life?” may assist with generalization to the community.

✓ Accept the need to re-teach a concept in different settings.
Attention/ Concentration

✓ Minimize distractions

There are a number of ways you can minimize distractions:

- Keep the room organized and neat (if you have a desk in the room, remove clutter, bright objects, props, etc.). Don’t leave things lying around.
- Hang all posters and wall charts at the back of the room. With FASD, less is more, so keep the amount of materials on the walls to a minimum.
- Seat the participant away from the window or other noisy areas. Preferably, seat them near the front of the room where you speak from.
- If you have a choice, select a classroom in a quieter area – be mindful of the level of noise in the hallway.
- Minimize talking amongst participants while you’re speaking.

✓ Briefly state the goal of the session to focus their attention in that direction before beginning.

✓ Keep a routine – always have a flipchart posted outlining the key session segments. This shows the order of the session and what’s been covered, which can help them follow along.

✓ Use visual attention getters – diagrams, pictures, posters, objects.

✓ Regain focus by calling them by name or standing near them.

✓ Vary the volume and tone of your voice.

✓ Call their attention to important information by saying “this is VERY important” or “you’ll probably want to write this down”.

✓ Keep instructions and directions short, simple and direct.

✓ Don’t write too much on one flipchart – if you prepare material ahead of time, fold the flipchart from bottom to top to hide some of the material. Remember, the point to using a flipchart is to draw their attention to important points not to overwhelm them. Reveal
the points as you get to them.

✓ Break tasks into manageable parts – allow them to complete one at a time.

✓ Provide more frequent (or at least an extra) break(s) – offenders with FASD can find it harder to concentrate for a long time and will often come back re-focused after break.

✓ Make activities and small group work brief.

✓ Teach and role-model simple “self-talk” to stay focused (e.g., “Focus Steve”).

✓ Make all print material “user-friendly”.

Making handouts and assignments “user friendly” so as not to lose your participants’ focus will be key with this group. At the most basic level, this means:

- Including white space.
- Limiting text.
- Emphasizing key words and headings (bold or italic font)
- Using a consistent font size & style for ease of reading.
- Using pictures if possible.

For more tips, see: “How to Make your Speech (and Written Material) Easy to Understand” (Appendix E) and “How to Make Print Material Easy to Read” (Appendix G).

✓ Establish a signal to indicate frustration and that they can no longer focus.
Organization and Planning

✓ **Provide a highly structured environment and tasks.**
  ➢ Have a predictable routine so they know what to expect – minimize transitions or prepare them in advance whenever possible.
  ➢ Provide an outline of the key points covered (in the order covered) – this can help them follow along. Make sure they are simple, clear, and concise. Point-form or numbered steps are helpful.

✓ **Provide binders** for handouts and assignments.

✓ **Have them date all work**, number pages, and place them in chronological order.

✓ **Colour code important handouts/workbooks** – this will assist with retrieval.

✓ **Supply calendars or day planners** that can be inserted into their binder or taped on the front. These should include important dates (e.g., session days/time, make-up sessions, when assignments are due), and any changes in routine (Appendix C).

✓ **Remind offenders of assignment due dates.**

✓ **Use “sticky” notes** to mark important pages.

✓ **Highlight important words and points** to remember (including directly onto their handout).

✓ **Help them prioritize** material by saying: “This is the most important part of this assignment/ lesson.”

✓ **Break down difficult or larger tasks** into smaller tasks.
Anger & Frustration

✓ **Remain calm** – don’t take behavioural outbursts personally. Speak calmly and slowly without becoming excited.

  ➢ **TIP: Speak in a low volume voice.** If you speak quieter, the automatic tendency of anyone around you is to become still so they can hear what you’re saying.

✓ **Calm the individual by calming their environment** - try to minimize stimuli in the environment that might lead them to become agitated, frustrated, or restless. Too much noise, clutter, and distraction are common culprits. Therefore, try to provide a quiet environment free of distraction, especially when they’re working or need to focus.

✓ **Identify common triggers** and help them develop better coping strategies.

Offenders with FASD may have difficulty identifying what triggers their frustration and will need help detecting the cues that indicate that their arousal level is increasing – try to get them to recognize some of the physical signs as these tend to be more obvious, rather than what they’re thinking.

**TO DETECT AROUSAL**: Use the Green, Yellow, Red (GYR) tool to detect increasing levels of arousal – it’s simple, effective and most offenders enjoy it. Relate G, Y, R to the colours on a traffic light – make this visual when explaining it to them by actually drawing a traffic light (Appendix A).

**TO CALM**: Simple coping skills for calming down include: time-out, calming self-talk. Role model and practice with them repeatedly until it becomes automatic.

✓ **Provide consistent feedback** and positive reinforcement.

✓ **Redirect the participant away** from the source of frustration or remove whatever is causing the outburst if at all possible.
✓ **Allow the individual to leave** the room to regroup if needed.

✓ **Anticipate those activities that trigger** frustration and restructure them for success.

✓ **Agree on a signal** that the individual can give to let you know they’re frustrated or getting frustrated.

✓ **Recognize positive behaviour** and responses.

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**Social Skills**

✓ **Do not be personally offended** by their comments or behaviour.

✓ **Provide immediate and direct feedback** on social behaviour, but do this in a sensitive manner – use of non-verbal cues, such as a time out signal, may be helpful to at least indicate to the person that there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

  ➢ **Remember:** What you don’t want to do is embarrass the individual. Depending on the behaviour, it may be best to approach more sensitive issues one-on-one.

  ➢ If it is a sensitive issue, it may be beneficial to first try redirecting the individual’s attention to another topic or getting them to do something. Then deal with the issue privately.

✓ **If language is inappropriate**, repeat what was said in a socially appropriate manner.

✓ **Role model appropriate behaviour** – you should attempt to be a good listener and not interrupt others. Taking turns in conversation is also important in order to show that everyone has an opportunity to speak.

✓ **Make sure to give a lot of positive reinforcement** and to praise successes – even improvements in behaviour can be praised after class.

✓ **Spend more time on social skills** training if this is part of the curriculum – practice and review often.
Impulse Control

- **Let them doodle or provide “squeeze” toys.**
  - Letting offenders doodle or providing squeeze toys (aka “stress balls”) can provide the tactile stimulation individuals with FASD (and ADHD) often need and can actually help them focus and be less intrusive.
  - **TIP:** Make sure to focus their attention when important points are made. State “this is really important to remember” in order to make sure you have their attention and emphasize key take home messages. Have them write down these sentences in their workbook (you may also want to write them on a flipchart for them to copy).

- **Sit them near you** so you can get their attention if they are fidgeting or being disruptive.

- **Encourage the use of self-monitoring** techniques.

- **Remind them of the Group Guidelines**

- **Have them talk through an activity** before carrying it out.

- **Role model appropriate behaviour** and identify it in a group setting.

- **Give positive reinforcement** and **praise** successes.

Tests and Assignments

- **Make all print material clear and easy to read** – in addition to handouts, assignments and tests, this extends to flipcharts, overheads, and writing on whiteboards.
  - Reduce and/or enlarge the amount of material on one page.
  - Minimize clutter – too many pictures, words, etc. are distracting. Design worksheets with plenty of white space.
  - See “How to Make Print Material Easy to Read” (Appendix G).
✓ Colour code important worksheets or handouts that they’ll be referred to often.

✓ Assign small amounts of homework – if they struggle in group, they will struggle even more with homework or will not do it at all.

✓ Allow them to work in a private room to minimize distractions and help them concentrate when writing tests.

✓ Give them extra time to complete tests and assignments.

✓ Consider allowing them to complete assignments and quizzes orally – determine which testing format works best for them (multiple choice, fill in the blank, etc.).

✓ Consider letting participants work in pairs when possible.

Other Resources

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

Canadian Center on Substance Abuse (CCSA)
http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/Topics/Populations/FetalAlcoholSpectrum/Pages/default.aspx

Fetal Alcohol Disorders Society
http://www.faslink.org/

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS)
http://www.nofas.org/

Towards inclusion: tapping hidden strengths – Planning for students who are alcohol-affected. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
Making a difference: working with students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Yukon Education

FASD Tool Kit for Aboriginal Families & Communities. Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers.

Teaching students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Alberta Education
http://education.alberta.ca/media/377037/fasd.pdf

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: talking about special education (Vol. II). First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association

The content of this chapter can be viewed in its entirety and unmodified by visiting the
CSC Responsivity Portal at:
http://infonet/SoloSites/ResponsivityPortal/home.htm?lang=en
Intellectual Disabilities (IDs)
What is an Intellectual Disability (ID)?

An intellectual disability is a disability that significantly affects one’s ability to learn at the same pace or as to the same extent as others. Other significant characteristics of an ID are the inability to understand abstract concepts and adapting to the demands of everyday life. Often diagnosed early in childhood and continues throughout the person’s life.

General Program Delivery Tips

- **Develop a good working relationship.**
  - Be patient, flexible, empathic, understanding, trusting, and willing to work to keep them in the program.
  - Make your first task everyday a check-in to see how the participant is doing.

- **Don’t talk down to the individual** (instead, talk in an age-appropriate fashion) and don’t add to or complete their sentences (instead, once the individual completes a sentence, use reflection or rephrasing to make sure you understand).

- **Provide structure and consistency** – this means making sure you have a clear agenda, follow a similar routine each day, repeat and display your objectives, use the same seating, etc.

- **Be aware of how you speak** - use simple, short, uncomplicated sentences. Speak clearly and at a reduced pace.

- **Teach material in small chunks** and organize work the same way.

- **Make all instruction concrete and relevant** – the mantra of concrete instruction is “see it, hear it, touch it, do it.” Avoid abstract concepts.

- **Design all instruction with generalization in mind** – they may learn only what you teach and have difficulty generalizing or knowing when, where and how to apply what they have learned.
  - You may need to give many more examples and provide more direct practice and instruction.

- **Keep distractions and transitions to a minimum.**
✓ **Rely heavily on repetition** – repeat instructions and directions frequently and ask the individual if further clarification is needed. Repeat important points and review core skills and concepts often.

✓ **Make your material visual** – offenders with IDs learn best by seeing and doing.

✓ **Put skills in context** so there is a reason for learning tasks.

✓ **Provide an encouraging and supportive learning environment** – reward small accomplishments through verbal praise to help build self-esteem and a belief in their capabilities.

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### Attention/Concentration

✓ **Minimize distractions** – see “Minimizing Distractions Checklist” (Appendix J).

✓ **Briefly state the goal of the lesson** to focus their attention in that direction before beginning. Make sure you have their attention before you begin.

✓ **Keep a routine** – always have a flipchart posted outlining the key session segments. This shows the order of the session and what’s been covered, and allows them to follow along.

✓ **Use visual attention getters** – diagrams, pictures, posters, objects.

✓ **Regain focus by calling them by name** or standing near them.

✓ **Vary the volume and tone of your voice**.

✓ **Call their attention to important information** by saying “this is VERY important” or “you’ll probably want to write this down”.

✓ **Speak clearly, using short sentences**. Keep instructions and directions short, simple and direct, otherwise they may “drift”.

✓ **Keep flipchart information to a minimum** – if you prepare material ahead of time, fold the flipchart from bottom to top to hide some of the material. Remember, the point of using a flipchart is to draw their attention to important points not to overwhelm them.
Reveal the points as you get to them.

✓ **Break tasks into manageable parts** – allow them to complete one at a time.

✓ **Provide more frequent (or at least an extra) break(s)** – offenders with IDs can find it difficult to concentrate for a long time and will often come back re-focused after break.

✓ **Make activities and small group work brief.**

✓ **Teach and role-model simple “self-talk”** to stay focused (e.g., “Focus Joe”).

✓ **Make all print material “user-friendly”**

Making handouts and assignments “user-friendly” so as not to lose your participants' focus can be of considerable benefit when working with offenders with IDs. This means:

- Lots of white space,
- Not a lot of text,
- Using and highlighting (e.g., make bold) key words and headings,
- Using a consistent font size & style (minimum 14-point font, Arial) for ease of reading, and
- Using pictures where appropriate (but not too many).

See “How to Make Print Material Clear and Easy to Read” (Appendix G).

✓ **Establish a signal to indicate frustration** and that they can no longer focus.
Short-term Memory

✓ **Repeat material often** – provide opportunities to practice, role model and over-learn skills.

✓ **Break material down** into shorter segments, whether you are writing on the flipchart or presenting orally. Avoid long sentences and explanations.

✓ **Use visual aids** whenever possible – pictures, drawings, cue cards, post-it notes, lists.

✓ **Use as many sense modalities as possible.**
  - Offenders with IDs are more likely to remember things that they see, smell and touch than when they just hear things alone. Seeing and doing something also can help make abstract concepts concrete, which is imperative for learning in this group.
  - Try using visual attention getters, such as posters, objects and colours; always make sure to give written directions along with verbal instructions.

✓ **Use acronyms.**
  - Some acronyms that can be related to real life (e.g., CPR for challenging thinking in Correctional Programs). Others may need to be provided on cue cards they can pull out in order to facilitate recall (e.g., FOCUS for problem-solving) (Appendix B).

✓ **Make the information relevant** to them – relating material to their personal lives makes ‘foreign’ concepts more memorable. Try to work with the examples they give you.

✓ **Simplify the material being taught** - use simple language, short sentences, and speak clearly and slowly.

✓ **Ask them:** “How do you remember what you need to?” and reinforce their own memory aids.
Improving Judgment

- **Post Group Guidelines (Class Rules).**
  - State specific rules for expected behaviour in clear and simple language.

- **Use a token economy system** aimed at rewarding desired behaviour. Be consistent in your approach.

- **Use immediate reinforcement** to link the behaviour with its consequences.

- **Discuss appropriate social conduct** – boundaries, topics to be shared, language.

- **Model and role play expected behaviour.**
  - Show them what being a good listener and taking turns talking look like.
  - Remember that offenders with IDs will often learn by seeing what others do.

- **Use STOP and THINK often.**
  - Get them in the habit of stopping what they are doing before they make a decision. Have them think about what they want to do and whether it would be “good” or “bad” for them.

Language and Comprehension

Program Material (Receptive Communication):

- **Reduce distractions** – seat them near the front of the room (where you’re speaking from), only allow one person to talk at once, and minimize outside noise.

- **Speak slower and leave pauses** for the person to process your words.

- **Use clear and simple language** – be as concrete as possible.

- **Make your speech easy to understand.**
  - To learn how, see “How to Make Your Speech (and Written Material) Easy to Understand” (Appendix E).
✓ **Use body language**, facial expression and eye contact to convey mood and feelings. Make sure to face the individual when speaking because they will often read these non-verbal cues.

✓ **Carefully control the pace of each session** – beware of falling into the trap of trying to keep pace with the “talkers”.

✓ **Do only one thing at a time** – cover only one topic at a time; give only one direction at a time; and ask only one question at a time. Give them time to respond.

✓ **Break long, new tasks into short steps** and demonstrate the steps. Have the individual do the steps, one at a time, providing assistance as necessary.

✓ **Emphasize key points** – what are one or two key points you want to be the “take home” message(s) of the lesson?
  - Repeat these throughout the session and during wrap-up.
  - Emphasize key points by varying the tone of your voice.

✓ **Summarize and repeat** information often. Check for understanding regularly.
  - See “How to Check for Understanding” (Appendix F).

✓ **Give more examples** and provide more opportunities for practice.

✓ **Provide supportive and corrective feedback** more often.

✓ **Teach material in a variety of ways** to accommodate different learning styles.

Communicate (Expressive Communication):

✓ **Allow adequate time** for responses – they may take more time to process what’s being said and to formulate a response.

✓ **You may need to explore their question with them** to clarify their concerns or what they are asking.

✓ **Guide them in their responses** by providing structure - ask “who,” “what,” or “where” questions. “When” or “how” questions may be more difficult for them to answer.
  - **Give cues** that you are expecting a response, such as saying their name or using a gesture.
✓ **Pay attention to visual cues when they’re speaking** – objects, pictures, diagrams, facial expressions and body language may all be helpful in understanding what they are saying.

**What to do when you can’t understand what they’re saying:**

**Don’t pretend** you understand what they’re saying if you don’t – this is disrespectful to the person and devalues their communication.

- Ask them to repeat what they’ve just said.
- Ask them to say it in another way.
- Ask them if they have a communication aid (a book or a board) that could help you understand.
- Ask specific questions to fill in the gaps.
- Verify the message by repeating or rephrasing.

**If you still can’t understand: be honest, show respect** for the person and acknowledge the importance of their message by apologizing for failing to understand them.

**Information Processing**

✓ **Speak clearly and simply** – avoid complicated language, long sentences, abstractions and idioms. Present information in small chunks.

✓ **Slow down** – Leave pauses for the individual to process your words after each sentence.

✓ **Allow extra time to answer** verbally (give them time to process the information).

✓ **Provide an outline** of the lesson so they know what to expect.

✓ **Take time to review the previous lesson.**

✓ **Phrase questions to give them a choice** of answers (a, b, c format) – this can assist with recall and reduce the time required for processing.
✓ **Avoid asking too many questions.** Ask one question at a time and provide adequate time for the person to formulate and give their reply.

✓ **Reduce distractions.**

✓ **Allow extra time for in-class assignments** and quizzes.

✓ **Modify assignments** and quizzes.

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**Problem-Solving**

✓ **Help them identify when a problem exists** and what the problem is – try using visual aids to help them know when they need to problem-solve.
  - Explain that the FOCUS model is like binoculars in that it helps you FOCUS on a problem so you can work to solve it (Appendix B).
  - Use a picture of a traffic light to prompt problem-solving in response to stress or when their emotions are running high.

✓ **When teaching problem solving:**
  - Take them through each of the steps as a group – watch your pacing.
  - Write the steps on a flipchart one at a time so they can follow along.
  - Provide a lot of opportunities to practice until responses become automatic.

✓ **Go through problem situations they have encountered** or are likely to encounter – help them generate options, problem-solve and practice these scenarios frequently.

✓ **Assign another participant to assist.**

✓ **Repeatedly ask:** “How does this apply to your life?” may assist with generalization to the community.

✓ **Accept the need to re-teach** a concept more than usual and across different settings.

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“I often enlist peer helpers in the class to assist those who are having difficulty.”
Reading

✓ **Always read handouts**, overheads, or any printed work to them.

✓ **Avoid overwhelming** the individual with multiple complex instructions – use point form, short sentences and easy-to-understand language.

✓ **Enlarge material on the page**. Use large writing on whiteboards and flipcharts.

✓ **Have fewer questions** on a page.

✓ **Minimize noise** as much as possible when they’re reading / working on assignments.

✓ **Provide reading aids**, such as colour overlays and ear plugs to block out extraneous noise.
  - Colour overlays are sheets of coloured plastic film suitable for placing over a page of text when reading. Colour overlays will help the letters stand out better on a page when reading and assist with reading fluency.

✓ **Give them cue cards with “windows”** (a rectangular shape) cut out of the center to focus their attention on only a few words or sentences at a time.
  - Other easy alternatives: have them **use a ruler or piece of paper** to cover everything except what’s being read at that moment.

✓ **Allow extra time to read** assignments and handouts.

✓ **Use the Pause, Prompt, Praise technique** - this is a technique developed to enhance language learning and reading by: a) pausing to allow the student to correct his or her own mistake, b) prompting the student by giving a hint, and c) praising their accomplishments and/or effort using descriptive and specific phrases.

✓ Make handouts and other support materials (flipcharts, overheads, etc.) clear and easy-to-read.
Writing

✓ **Let them use point form** when completing handouts and homework.

✓ **Ignore bad grammar and spelling** – look for understanding of program material.

✓ **Allow opportunities to clarify** what they wrote without being penalized.

✓ **If they’re stronger verbally, test understanding verbally.**

Organization and Time Management

✓ **Structure the environment** and all tasks.
  
  ➢ Follow a predictable routine and minimize transitions – consistency will help them know what to expect and minimize the anxiety they often experience with change.
  
  ➢ Try to also provide an outline of the key points you’ll be covering at the beginning of each lesson. You may want to post them on a flipchart (or white board) and leave them up throughout the session, checking off each topic as you move through the list. This will help your participants follow along and take notes. Your outline should be simple, clear, and concise. Point form or numbered steps (1, 2, 3) are often helpful.

✓ **Provide binders** for handouts and assignments.

✓ **Have them date all work**, number pages and place them in chronological order.

✓ **Colour code** important handouts (Appendix K).

✓ **Supply calendars or day planners** that can be inserted into their binder or taped on the front (Appendix C).
  
  ➢ Binders and calendars should include important dates (e.g., session days/time, make-up sessions, when assignments are due), and any changes in routine.
✓ **Develop checklists** or tracking sheets so that they can follow their own progress – see “Help Participants Stay Organized (and Motivated!) by Using Checklists” in the Appendix for more.

✓ **Remind them of assignment due dates often** – you may even want to try a buddy system where a reliable peer can remind them of important events outside of the program.

✓ **Use “sticky” notes** to mark important pages.

✓ **Highlight important words** and points to remember (including directly onto their handout).

✓ **Help them prioritize** material by saying: “This is the most important part of this assignment/ lesson.”

✓ **Break down difficult or larger tasks** into smaller tasks – you may want to have them time how long it takes them to complete a specific (and representative) portion of a task. This can be used as a base to estimate the time that should be allotted for the assignment in its entirety, as well as future tasks of similar complexity. They will likely need to allot extra time for most tasks.

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**Social Skills**

✓ **Do not be personally offended** by their comments or behaviour.

✓ **If language is inappropriate**, repeat what was said in a socially appropriate manner.

✓ **Role model appropriate behaviour** – you should attempt to be a good listener and not interrupt others. Taking turns in conversation is also important in order to show that everyone has an opportunity to speak.

✓ **Provide immediate and direct feedback** on social behaviour, but do this in a sensitive manner – use of non-verbal cues, such as a time out signal, may be helpful to at least indicate to the person that there is a problem that needs to be addressed.
➤ **Remember:** Depending on the behaviour, it may be best to approach more sensitive issues one-on-one. If it is a sensitive issue, it may be beneficial to first try redirecting the individual’s attention to another topic or getting them to do something. Then deal with the issue privately.

✔ **Make sure to give positive reinforcement** and to praise successes.

✔ **Spend more time on social skills** training

### Challenging Behaviour

✔ **Remain calm** – Speak calmly and slowly without becoming excited.

✔ **Calm the individual by calming their environment** - try to minimize stimuli in the environment that might lead them to become agitated, frustrated, or restless.

✔ **Identify common triggers** and help them develop better coping strategies

✔ **Role play and practice coping** strategies often – time out and simple calming self-talk statements can work well.

✔ **Provide consistent feedback** and positive reinforcement.

✔ **Redirect the participant away** from the source of frustration or remove whatever is causing the outburst if at all possible.

✔ **Allow the individual to leave** the room to regroup if needed.

✔ **Anticipate those activities that trigger** frustration and restructure them for success.

✔ **Agree on a signal** that the individual can give to let you know they’re frustrated or getting frustrated.

✔ **Develop a cuing system** – gestures or verbal – that will redirect the participant.

✔ **Recognize positive behaviour** and responses.
Tests and Assignments

✔ Make all print material clear and easy to read – in addition to handouts, assignments and tests, this extends to flipcharts, overheads, and writing on whiteboards.
  o See “How to Make Print Material Clear and Easy to Read” (Appendix G).

✔ Colour code important worksheets or handouts that they’ll be referred to often.

✔ Give them extra time to complete tests and assignments.

✔ Assign small amounts of homework – if they struggle in group, they’ll struggle even more with homework or will not do it at all.

✔ Allow them to work in a private room to minimize distractions and help them concentrate when writing tests.

✔ Consider allowing them to complete assignments and quizzes orally – find out what testing format works best for them (multiple choice, fill in the blank, etc.).

✔ Consider letting participants work in pairs when possible.

Assisting Offenders: Tips and techniques for Correctional Program Officers
Other Resources

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)
http://www.aaidd.org/index.cfm

ARCH Disability Law Center – List of Disability Organizations
http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/?q=useful-links/disability-organizations

Understanding Intellectual Disability and Health, University of London, UK:
http://www.intellectualdisability.info/

Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Teachers, BC Ministry of Education
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sid/

The content of this chapter can be viewed in its entirety and unmodified by visiting the

CSC Responsivity Portal at:

http://infonet/SoloSites/ResponsivityPortal/home.htm?lang=en
LEARNING DISABILITIES (LDs)
What is an LD?

The term learning disability can be used to describe various types of learning problems. These learning problems can be associated with difficulty in school subjects such as reading, writing, and math. However, a learning disability can also have an impact listening and reasoning abilities as well.

Types of Learning Disabilities

- Dyslexia – language processing
- Dyscalculia – math
- Dysgraphia – writing
- Dyspraxia – fine motor skills
- Auditory Processing Disorder – hearing differences in sounds
- Visual Processing Disorder – interpreting visual information

General Accommodations for LDs

- **Structure and predictability** – each session should be structured in such a way that participants know what to expect. Consistency and routine help the person stay on task.
  - Provide an outline of the lesson covering the key topics to be discussed.
  - Provide breaks at regular times.
  - Prepare them for transitions and any changes in routine.

- **Simplicity**
  - Structure the program for success by starting with simple tasks, using materials that the individual can understand.
  - Try to always keep instructions simple, and speak slowly and clearly to allow for longer processing time.
  - Avoid abstract ideas – use concrete examples whenever possible. When it isn’t possible, provide lots of examples and be prepared to review often.
✓ **Variety.** Remember that everyone learns differently and, by using a wide variety of materials when you’re teaching, you will be more likely to capture all students’ strengths.

  - Incorporate text, images, and the use of flipcharts, videos and other visual aids, as well as opportunities for students to learn by doing. Make material memorable.

✓ **Responsibility for learning.**

  - Encourage offenders with LDs to take responsibility for their learning by encouraging self-monitoring, helping them track their progress, and teaching them how to set measurable and attainable goals.

✓ **Few distractions** – this includes noise and clutter.

✓ **Regular feedback** – feedback should be provided regularly and often. It should be immediate and to the point, and positive and constructive.

✓ **Opportunities to be heard.**

  - Participants should be able to express their concerns and opinions freely. When they are struggling, ask them for their input on how they learn best so that you are better equipped to help them.

✓ **Inclusiveness.**

✓ **Positive relationships.**

  - Positive relationships are important for all class members and vital to creating a non-intimidating environment conducive to learning.

  - A positive working relationship with the teacher may be among the most important of all.
Develop an Effective Working Relationship

✓ **Be supportive.** Respect, encourage, recognize small achievements, and do not allow derogatory statements to be made by others.

✓ **Show empathy.**
  - Remind the person of their strengths and encourage them to focus on those, rather than their weaknesses.

Students with LDs have at least average intelligence but most likely have experienced failure. They deserve to be treated like adults, and with dignity and respect.

✓ **Use effective communication skills.**

  - *Encourage.* Use verbal and non-verbal cues to show that you’re listening.
  - *Clarify.* Ask questions if you do not understand. This conveys interest and shows you care about what they have to say.
  - *Restate.* Repeat what was said in your own words.
  - *Reflect.* Tell the participant how you understood what they said to ensure your perception is accurate.
  - *Summarize.* Review major ideas or themes in what was said.
  - *Validate.* Demonstrate appreciation for what the individual has shared with you.

✓ **Provide positive reinforcement.** Many offenders with LDs will have experienced failure in school, as well as in many other areas of their lives. Help instil a sense of motivation to learn by reinforcing small accomplishments.

✓ **ASK them** how they learn.

✓ **Be clear and realistic.**

  - Be clear about what you can do to help.
  - Help them set realistic goals to work towards.
  - Be realistic in your expectations.

✓ **Encourage the participant to discuss any difficulties** they are having with the material you are using.
Attention/Concentration

✓ Briefly state the goal of the lesson to focus their attention in that direction before beginning.

✓ Similarly, at the beginning of each activity state the objective being pursued and the pertinence of the activity (in order to motivate adult learners).

✓ Have a flipchart posted outlining the key session segments – show the order of the session and check off as you cover topics. This adds structure to the lesson and allows participants to follow along.

✓ Present information in small chunks, at a good pace. For homework assignments, suggest that they divide long, complicated assignments into several smaller sections and that they schedule breaks.

✓ Provide more frequent breaks, especially during ‘heavy’ lessons. Adults with LDs will often fatigue more easily when intense focus is required.

✓ Keep instructions and directions short, simple and direct. Don’t give too many directions at once. Always provide instructions in written form.

✓ Keep the material relevant so they can logically follow along and (try) to keep it interesting.

✓ Use visual attention getters – diagrams, pictures, posters, objects. Visual aids can be particularly helpful for those who have difficulty attending to language.
  ➢ TIP: Provide visual cues, such as arrows and stop signs, on their worksheets.

✓ Provide checklists for longer or more difficult assignments to help them keep track of where they are.

✓ Ask the learners to mark an X on a sheet of paper on their work tables every time they realize they are being distracted. (With time, the moments of inattention will decrease because they will become more aware of them.)
✓ Regain focus by calling them by name or standing near them.

✓ Provide earplugs or headphones to screen out distracting sounds when undertaking written work.

✓ Vary the volume and tone of your voice (think about: monotone = sleep).

✓ Call their attention to important information by saying “this is VERY important” or “you’ll probably want to write this down.”

✓ From time to time, ask participants to reformulate something that was just said or to explain instructions just given.

✓ Don’t distribute handouts before you’re ready to use them.

✓ Ensure that handouts and overheads aren’t overly distracting.

✓ Get them moving. Have them flipchart, take a 5 minute stretching break, etc.

✓ Minimize distractions in the room

✓ Keep the room organized and neat, this includes your desk.

✓ Hang all posters and wall charts at the back of the room, behind where the participant is seated. A good motto to go by is “less is more” – keep the amount of material on the walls to a minimum.

✓ Provide preferential seating.
  ➢ Seat the individual away from the window or other noisy areas or sounds.

✓ If you have a choice, select a classroom in a quieter area – be mindful of the level of noise and traffic in the hallway.

✓ Minimize talking amongst participants while you’re speaking – only allow one person to talk at a time.
Impulse Control

- **Seat them near the front** of the room so you can get their attention easily if needed.
- **Remind them of the Group Guidelines.**
- **Role model appropriate behaviour** and identify it in a group setting.
- **Encourage the use of self-monitoring techniques** - Offenders with LDs may require assistance learning to self-monitor their level of emotional arousal, when they are becoming distracted, and when they are going to act without thinking.
  - **TIP** for self-monitoring emotional arousal: Many offenders like the Green-Yellow-Red (GYR) tool because it’s visual, simple, and easy to remember (Appendix A).
  - **TIP** for self-monitoring distraction: To help adults with LDs and/or ADHD get a sense of how long it generally takes them before becoming distracted, it can be helpful for them to time how long it takes on a task before they start to lose focus. Homework tasks can then be structured with this in mind as can tests.
  - **TIP** for impulse control surrounding distractibility: Try having the individual use a distractibility delay technique. Here the individual writes down distractions when they emerge rather than act on them, after which they return to the task at hand.
- **Teach strategies to slow down thought processes.**
- **Train them in guided self-talk.**
- **Give positive reinforcement.**

Hyperactivity

- **Remove unnecessary items from the work area.**
- **Get them moving.**
Participants with high energy levels are more likely to engage in distracting behaviour when they’re forced to sit through long periods of lecture or independent seatwork.

Instead, offer frequent opportunities for movement by designing instruction to actively engage them as learners: ask questions, have them flipchart or distribute handouts, incorporate role plays.

- **Provide a ‘stress ball’** or other quiet squishy toys.

- Many adults with LDs will also have ADHD and will need to have their hands moving. If the individual distracts other participants by fiddling with objects, it can be helpful to substitute an alternative motor behaviour that will not distract others. Give the participant a soft ‘stress ball’ (or leave several in a basket on a table for them to grab) and encourage the individual to squeeze it whenever he or she feels the need for motor movement.

- **Agree on a ‘silent signal’** to address disruptive behaviours in a low-key manner.

- Meet privately with the individual and identify for the participant the motor or verbal behaviours that appear to be most distracting. With the participant's help, select a silent signal that you can use to alert the individual that his or her behaviour has crossed the threshold and is now distracting to others. You may want to role-play one or two scenarios with the individual in which you use the silent signal and the student then controls the problem behaviour.

- Be sure to praise them privately when they respond appropriately to the signal.

- **If they rush through their work, prompt them to re-check** it before submitting.

- **If their behaviour becomes disruptive, remind them of the group guidelines (rules) and** speak to them privately after class.
Meeting Responsivity

✓ **Teach the way they learn the best.**

✓ Do not be afraid to ask participants how they learn best – most learners have a favourite way of learning and, if asked, could likely describe it.

✓ Both you and the participant should decide what learning style they favour: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, or a combination of these. Once you know their preferred method of learning, try to teach to that style whenever possible. Many will benefit from a combination approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual learners</th>
<th>Auditory learners</th>
<th>Kinesthetic learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a good memory for visual details.</td>
<td>Like to discuss the material and read it out loud.</td>
<td>Have to do it to know it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can follow along when others read.</td>
<td>Study by talking out loud.</td>
<td>Prefer activity-based learning over oral instruction or reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would rather see what they’re learning.</td>
<td>Go through assignments or tasks by talking themselves through them.</td>
<td>Study (or learn best) by writing things over and over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need written instructions.</td>
<td>Need oral explanations / instructions.</td>
<td>May be restless in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have difficulty following oral instruction.</td>
<td>Have trouble with written direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ **Use mnemonics to aid in recall.**

➢ Try rhymes, acronyms, and associating something new with something old.

✓ **Break material down and present it in smaller segments.**

✓ **Simplify the material** – use simple language, short sentences, and speak clearly.

✓ **Make the information relevant** to them – relating material to their own lives makes material more meaningful and likely to be remembered.

“I try to make the material concrete to something they have an interest in, like a favourite sport or TV show.”
✓ **Use as many sense modalities as possible** – sight, smell, touch, and hearing.

✓ **Try to pair visual aids** with spoken words.
  - Use pictures, objects or diagrams to convey core concepts, skills, or the steps involved in a task. Offenders who are visual learners may also find drawing diagrams themselves assists with learning and memory.
  - Pair written directions with oral directions.
  - Use coloured marker to highlight important words when flipcharting.

✓ **Rely heavily on to-do lists**, agendas, and/or calendars to help them remember tasks. These will not only assist with memory but will also help with organization and time management (Appendix C).

✓ **Rely heavily on repetition**: practice and review
  - Repeat important information and instructions during each session.
  - At the beginning of each new session, make sure you review the material that was covered in the previous session. Link new material with skills and ideas already learned.
  - Give them time to review material during each session in order to improve retention.
  - Have the offender repeat back to you the instructions to ensure he or she did understand.

✓ **Focus on what they need to remember** – what are the KEY take home messages of the lesson?

**Organization and Time Management**

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**Organization**

✓ **Provide a highly structured environment and tasks.**
  - Have a predictable routine so they know what to expect.
  - Provide an outline of the key points covered (in the order they’re covered) to help them follow along and take notes. Make them simple, clear and concise. Point form or numbered steps (1, 2, 3) are often helpful.

✓ **Provide binders** for handouts and assignments.
✓ **Have them date all work, number pages** and place them in chronological order.

✓ **Colour code** important handouts. Have different coloured notebooks for different subjects.

✓ **Supply calendars or day planners** that can be inserted into their binders or taped on the front – they should include important dates (e.g., session days/time, make-up sessions, when assignments are due), and any changes in routine (Appendix C).

✓ **Break down difficult or larger tasks** into smaller tasks.

✓ **Develop checklists or tracking sheets** so that they can follow their own progress.

  ➢ **TIP**: It can be useful to create checklists for assignments that need to be broken down into more manageable (smaller) chunks. Breaking the task down makes it seem less daunting and, by checking off each step as it’s completed, small accomplishments are being reinforced.

✓ **Remind** participants of assignment due dates.

**Prioritization**

✓ **Create TO DO lists** to prioritize assignments/tasks for them.

✓ **Use “sticky” notes** to mark important pages (e.g., pages they’ll need to refer to for an assignment).

✓ **Help them prioritize material** by saying: “This is the most important part of this assignment/lesson.” Write it down and instruct them to do the same.

✓ **Have them highlight or underline** important parts of readings or handouts.

**Time Management**

✓ **Get them to post deadline reminders** (appointments, sessions, etc.) in highly visible places.

✓ **Get them in the habit of using checklists, calendars, and day-planners.**

  ➢ **Before they’re able to plan their time appropriately using schedules or planners,**
they may need some help understanding time management. You can develop this awareness by asking them to keep a log of all of the activities they’re involved in during a typical day, from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed. They should also list the length of time each of these activities takes.

- Once they have their list, have them decide what items they ‘must’ do and what items they ‘choose’ to do and have them note their decisions beside each item. By doing this, they’ll be able to see how much ‘free’ time they have during a typical day. This time may be better used with some activity that has higher priority in their lives (the must do’s). It will also help them see how much time they have allotted for activities such as homework.

✓ Have them overestimate the time it takes to complete more difficult tasks.
- You can even do this by having them break large tasks into pieces, adding extra time to complete each section. They should write a list of all of the mini-tasks and check them off as they complete them.

Visual Spatial Skill Deficits

✓ Minimize clutter and visual distractions in the classroom.

✓ Let students use graph paper to align numbers on paper (or, alternatively, have them turn lined paper vertically when they write).

✓ Provide extra space on assignments for written responses.

✓ Provide examples of how to lay out written assignments.

✓ Enlarge print to assist with visual processing.

✓ Limit the amount of material presented on a single page – avoid clutter (e.g., remove extraneous pictures).

✓ Reduce the amount of written work required – provide lesson notes in advance or assign a note-taker to assist.
**Language Processing**

- **Provide lesson notes** (or a general outline with the main points to be discussed) ahead of time so they know what will be covered and can follow along more easily.

- **Provide preferential seating.**

- **Minimize or eliminate any distractions** that could interfere with their ability to focus on and process what is being said. Only allow one person to speak at a time.

- **Use clear and simple language** – avoid long, complicated sentences. Avoid expressions with hidden meaning (sarcasm, figures of speech, etc.).
  - Use easy to understand words that people know well.
  - Use examples to explain things – try to draw on examples from their everyday lives when possible.
  - Use the same word to describe the same thing throughout your program.
  - Keep your sentences short and to the point.
  - Order the material being presented in a logical sequence and stay on topic.

- **Repeat** important information frequently – allot extra time for practice and review.

- **Keep a steady pace but don’t move too quickly** – they will need more time to process what is being said, especially with more difficult material.

- **Provide opportunities for them to ask questions** when they require clarification. Encourage them to let you know when they are confused or when the material is being covered too quickly.

- **Break things down.**
  - Rather than giving one long-winded explanation for something, break your explanation into small steps – try numbering the points to make it more digestible.
  - Do the same when giving instructions.
Don’t ask too many questions at once – ask one question at a time and give them time to respond.

Get into the habit of having offenders with LDs repeat, in their own words, what they have understood in a particular session. This creates an opportunity for feedback and correction, as well as reinforcing the material presented.

Write down more difficult concepts, explanations, and key messages in addition to conveying them verbally. Bullet form is helpful.

Make abstract concepts concrete through the use of visual aids, demonstrations, as well as by providing extra examples.

Help them draw links between something they already know and something new they are learning.

Prevent information overload – what are the key take home messages of the lesson. Focus more on those and leave the rest out (especially during reviews).

Decision-Making

Help them identify when a problem exists and what the problem is.

Teach them skilled vs. automatic thinking – this means taking a TIME OUT to STOP and THINK before acting.

Model meta-cognitive strategies.

Teach them to use a mnemonic device to help remember the steps involved in problemsolving/decision-making.

In Correctional Programs, the acronym FOCUS is useful here.
- Make sure to write the FOCUS steps on a flipchart one at a time so they can follow along. Role play or discuss and apply the steps to problems they're likely to encounter.
- **Tip:** Give participants a cue card with the FOCUS steps written out in simple terms. This will enable them to pull it out when needed and rely less on memory (Appendix B).

## Coordination Difficulties

**For Offenders with Gross Motor Skill Difficulties:**

- **Provide an adjustable chair** – this enables them to adjust its height to maximize posture and stability.
- **Make sure the room is organized** and that aisles are clear – this will allow them to get around more easily and reduce the likelihood of bumping into things.
- **Ensure necessary materials are easily accessible** – pens/pencils, paper, and any other tools required for tasks.
- **Be consistent and predictable** – give them advance notice of transitions. Provide them with an outline of the lesson and what will be required when (e.g., group discussion, individual seat work, role plays, etc.).
- **Consider letting them sit out role plays** – this will be at your discretion and based upon their motor capabilities. As many offenders become anxious in these situations, for those who are clumsy or have difficulty manoeuvring, this can be even more anxiety provoking.
- **Consider allowing extra time** to complete tasks, as required.
- **Provide opportunities to get up** for movement breaks.
- **Help them stay organized** by using the tips provided in Strategies to Assist with Organization and Time Management.

"I have discussed issues of focus prior to the program and given them permission to get up quietly and leave the room briefly to restore their focus."
For Offenders with Fine Motor Skill Difficulties:

- **Minimize the amount of written work** required – written tasks can be highly fatiguing for these individuals.
  - Provide notes in advance of the lesson.
  - Let them respond to paper-based questions in point form.
  - Provide a note taker or tutor to assist with written work.

- **Have them try using pencil grips** – this can make writing more comfortable and assist with fine motor control.

- **Have them write on alternate lines** – this gives them more room to work with and can make their work easier to read.

- **Have them try using graph paper** – this can help them line up numbers and letters.

- **Give them more time** to complete written work – this will extend to tests, homework assignments, and in-class work. In general, offenders with fine motor skill deficits have trouble writing with any degree of speed.

**Social Skills**

- **Realize that they are not trying to be rude or insensitive** when they speak out of turn, change the topic, and so forth – be understanding and try to guide the behaviour in a more appropriate direction.

- **Teach them active listening** – it involves showing another person they are listening by maintaining eye contact, nodding their head to convey interest, and waiting their turn to speak. If they find their mind is wandering, have them mentally repeat the other person’s words to help them follow the conversation better. Have them practice this skill often.

- **Highlight the importance of asking questions** – it’s a good way of conveying interest and will make the person speaking feel attended to and appreciated.
Rather than blurting out something random that’s on their mind, encourage them to ask the person they are talking to a question about what they said. If their mind begins to drift it is also perfectly fine to ask the person speaking to repeat what was just said. Not only do they get to hear what was said again, but asking also lets the other person know that they care.

**Encourage thinking before speaking.**
- Many adults with LDs (sometimes due to co-occurring ADHD) have a tendency to say something before thinking it through fully and/or may cut off or interrupt others before they’re finished speaking. The resultant effect is the same: frustration and annoyance on the other person’s end.
- Much like impulse control, encourage adults with LDs to STOP and THINK before speaking – have them take a couple of deep breaths, collect their thoughts so they know what they’re going to say before speaking, and consider how what will be said will be perceived by others.

**Have them jot down what they want to say instead of interrupting.**
- Have them keep a small pad of paper where they can jot down what they are thinking and want to say. If another person is talking and they feel the urge to interrupt, rather than blurting out what they’re thinking, they can write it down instead.

**Minimize distractions** – if it's too noisy they may have difficulty concentrating on what is being said.

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### Classroom Confidence

**Find out what their strengths are** and capitalize on them.
- Recognize and appreciate that each individual has both strengths and weaknesses. Try to capitalize on these strengths whenever possible.

**Reframe negative thoughts** they express about themselves and/or their abilities when they emerge.

**Make them feel appreciated** – make all participants feel that their effort and contributions are valued and strengths appreciated.
✓ Create an atmosphere in which it is okay to make mistakes – encourage students to try new things even if they don’t get it right the first time. Be sure to set realistic goals and help participants to set realistic goals for themselves as well.

✓ Help them brainstorm solutions rather than providing them with the answers.
  ➢ Whether it has to do with academics or social situations, help the individual brainstorm possible solutions and the consequences associated with different choices when they encounter a problem. This is far more empowering than telling them what they “should” or “ought” to do.

✓ Structure opportunities for success – break larger assignments down into smaller ones so they aren’t overwhelmed. Try first assigning tasks/work that you know they are capable of doing and gradually increase the level of complexity as their confidence increases.

✓ Give students many opportunities for practice and review. Reinforce that we all learn at different speeds and that’s okay.

✓ Praise small achievements and successes (lots of positive reinforcement). Provide support (not punishment) when performance is poor.

Test and Assignment Accommodations

✓ Explain assignments clearly, both orally and in writing, with set deadlines and criteria for marking.

✓ Allow tests to be taken orally, one-on-one.
  ➢ Read directions and test items aloud to students (along with providing the written version). Give them adequate time to respond as it may take them longer to process what is said and to formulate an answer. A scribe may be required on occasion for those who have difficulty or are unable to write.
✓ **Allow extra time to complete tests and assignments.** You may also want to consider letting longer tests be completed in shorter segments (e.g. two or three shorter sessions) to accommodate for difficulties sustaining attention.

✓ **Allow the use of learning aids or assistive technology**, such as a tape recorder, dictionary, or thesaurus for tests.
  ➢ Allowing offenders to tape record their responses to questions on tests and assignments may provide a more accurate measure of what the offender has learned as it removes the time required to configure sentences and write.

✓ **Reduce the amount of text on a page**, provide text in enlarged font, and provide extra space for responses.

✓ **Allow students to take breaks** during tests and assignments.

✓ **Provide visual cues**, such as arrows and stop signs, on particular worksheets.

✓ **Provide quiet**, distraction-free areas for completing special assignments and tests. If possible, you may want to let the individual write tests or more complex in-class assignments in a separate room. This will allow for talking out loud and even fewer distractions.

✓ **Provide earplugs** or headphones to screen out distracting sounds.

✓ **Provide checklists** for complex assignments so they can check off each component as it’s completed. Providing directions and/or the steps involved in completing a task in point form or checklist format is also helpful.
Other Resources

Learning Disability Association of Canada (LDAC)
http://www.ldac-acta.ca/

Learning Disability Association of America (LDAA)
http://www.ldanatl.org/

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)
http://www.ncld.org/

Learning Disabilities Online!
http://www.ldonline.org/

Learning Disabilities Resource Community (LDRC)
http://www.ldrc.ca/

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)
http://www.interdys.org/index.htm

Dyscalculia.org
http://www.dyscalculia.org/

Dyspraxia Foundation
http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/

NLDline
http://www.nldline.com/

The content of this chapter can be viewed in its entirety and unmodified by visiting the CSC Responsivity Portal at:
http://infonet/SoloSites/ResponsivityPortal/home.htm?lang=en
APPENDIX
Appendix A: GYR Tool

**Green-Yellow-Red Tool for Self-Monitoring**

In Correctional Programs, the Green-Yellow-Red (GYR) is a self-monitoring tool that is often used to monitor emotional arousal and individuals' levels of risk. Being analogous to a traffic light, this tool is easy to remember (pairing a visual aid with a concept makes it easier to remember), simple and effective, and can essentially be applied to self-monitoring any type of behaviour. Here’s an example of how the GYR tool can be used to self-monitor emotions in the classroom:

**GREEN**
When they are in the GREEN, they’re calm and things are going well (therefore, green means “go”).

**YELLOW**
When they are in the YELLOW, they’re starting to get frustrated – they might be a bit annoyed or upset, palms could be starting to sweat, heart might be starting to beat a bit faster, etc. (therefore, yellow means proceed with caution – at this point, they should be implementing coping strategies to calm down BEFORE they get into the red).

**RED**
When they are in the RED it means DANGER or STOP. Here, they’re angry, could be lashing out, fists are clenched, etc. They will need to take a TIME OUT to regroup.
## Appendix B: FOCUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F – Facts, Feelings, Focus on goals</td>
<td>F – Facts, Feelings, Focus on goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>O – Options</td>
<td>O – Options</td>
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<tr>
<td>C – Consequences</td>
<td>C – Consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>U – Use a plan</td>
<td>U – Use a plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>S – Stand back and evaluate</td>
<td>S – Stand back and evaluate</td>
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<td>S – Stand back and evaluate</td>
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# Appendix C: Calendar

## Calendar

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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### Appendix D: CPR Cue Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CPR</strong></th>
<th><strong>CPR</strong></th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **C** – Consequences  
 *(What will happen if…?)* | **C** – Consequences  
 *(What will happen if…?)* |
| **P** – Personal Standards  
 *(Will I be proud of myself if I do this?)* | **P** – Personal Standards  
 *(Will I be proud of myself if I do this?)* |
| **R** – Reality  
 *(Is this really true or the only option I have?)* | **R** – Reality  
 *(Is this really true or the only option I have?)* |
Appendix E: How to Make your Speech (and Written Material) Easy to Understand

How to Make your Speech (and Written Material) Easy to Understand

Offenders with FASD will need material simplified, and this includes simplifying the way you speak. Below is an overview of what you can do to accommodate this need.

**Words:**

1. Use easy to understand words that people know well – don’t use difficult words and if you do need to use them, make sure you always explain them clearly.

2. Use examples to explain things – try to use ones your group will know from their everyday lives.

3. Use the same word to describe the same thing throughout your program.

4. Don’t use difficult ideas such as metaphors. A metaphor is a sentence that doesn’t actually mean what it says (e.g., “it’s raining cats and dogs” – they will take this literally).

5. Avoid using initials / acronyms (unless they’re program concepts and are necessary). We’re probably all guilty of creating unnecessary acronyms or using short-forms when writing on flipcharts or whiteboards. Avoid doing this if offenders in your group have cognitive or learning disabilities. Use short-forms in full where possible and if you have to use them, explain them.

6. Percentages and big numbers are hard to understand – try not to use them and instead use words like “few” and “many” to explain what you mean.

**Sentences:**

1. Always keep your sentences short.

2. Speak to participants directly (e.g., you can do this by using the word “you” - even when giving instructions in written format or on assignments).

3. Use positive sentences, rather than negative ones where possible. For example, instead of saying “You should not leave before the end of class” you could say “You should stay until the end of class.”
4. Use active language rather than passive language where possible. For example, instead of saying “You will have your assignment completed for next class,” you could say “You will hand in the assignment next class.”

**How to Order your Information:**

1. Always put your information in an order that’s easy to understand and follow.

2. Group all information about the same topic together.

3. Repeat important information and explain difficult words more than once (again, this includes when writing it down).
Appendix F: How to Check for Understanding

How to Check for Understanding

When working with offenders with cognitive impairments, including FASD, you want to make sure they understand what has been said in their own words. In other words, it’s not enough to simply ask “Do you understand?” This type of closed question (yes/no format) can be misleading as it’s easy for people to answer “yes” even if they don’t have a clue what you said.

TIP 1: Try asking questions like “Could you re-explain to me in your own words what I just said?”

Remember, for some offenders with cognitive impairments, their receptive language (ability to understand what’s been said) will be better than their expressive language (their ability to express themselves). For others it will be the reverse.

TIP 2: Always pay attention to their body language when they’re speaking as they often provide subtle clues that can help YOU understand what they’re trying to convey.

TIP 3: Accessibility Cards - These are cards that help students/participants have a voice in your program. Each participant gets a green, a yellow, and a red card. They should raise their green card when they agree with what you say and to show understanding. They should raise a yellow card to tell you that you’re speaking to fast. And they should raise a red card to tell you they don’t understand what you’re saying or to ask a question. Then you should explain it again with simpler words.
Appendix G: How to Make Print Material Easy to Read

How to Make Print Material Easy to Read

Similar to how you speak to an individual with FASD, when you’re developing print material (overheads, handouts, flipcharts, assignments, tests), you’ll need to pay attention to the words you use, how you structure your sentences, and how you organize your information. However, now you’ll also have to be cognizant of how the material is conveyed visually. Give the recommendations below a try – you’ll find they benefit all offenders, not just those with FASD.

Language:

• **Use clear and simple language** – this means using easy to understand words and short sentences.
  - Sentences can be kept short by using a full stop (period) before starting a new idea, rather than joining ideas using a comma or the word “and.”
  - Use point form where possible, such as when giving instructions. Numbered points (1,2,3) can be helpful.
  - Try to always start a new sentence on a new line.
  - Never use a hyphen to split a word over two lines.

• **Use the same word to describe the same thing throughout** – don’t use different words interchangeably.

• **Avoid using short-forms** and acronyms (unless they’re for program concepts and/or necessary) – if you use them, explain what they are in simple, clear language (try making the font bold, putting a text box around it, or highlighting it so it’s easy to locate).

• **Avoid using special characters** where possible, such as /, &, or #.

• **Avoid abbreviations**, such as “e.g.” or “etc.”

• **Speak to people directly** – use the word “you” when giving/writing instructions (e.g., “You are going to make your offence path by…”).

• Never use footnotes (when you explain something at the bottom of the page instead of explaining it in the text).

Ordering of Information:

• **Always put your information in an order that’s easy to understand and follow.**
• Group all information about the same topic together.
• It’s okay to repeat important information and to explain difficult words more than once.

Design and Format:

• **Use a computer font that’s clear and easy-to-read** for handouts, assignments, and tests.
  o For example, Arial and Tahoma are clear and easy-to-read.
  o NEVER USE fonts with the word “serif” in it – these fonts are harder to read because the shape of the letters is not clear. Century and Times New Roman also aren’t easy to read.

• **Reduce and/or enlarge the amount of material on one page.**
  o Make your font larger – minimum 14-point Arial font.
  o Design worksheets with a lot of white space.

• **Never use writing that’s too close together.** Never use italics (it’s very much like handwriting and is difficult to read).

• **Never use a special writing design,** such as shadowing our outlining text.

• **Don’t write whole words in capitals** – use upper and lower case (lower case is easier to read).

• **Use underlining with caution** – it can make the text harder to read for some people with IDs.

• **Print rather than write,** when flipcharting or writing on the white board. Writing is too cursive, which makes it more difficult to distinguish letters. Do your best to print neatly and larger than you normally would.

• **Watch the colours you use** and don’t use too many colours – reds, yellows and oranges can be difficult to see from the back of the room. Never use markers that are fading on a flipchart.

• **Never use a background that makes it difficult to read the text** on overheads and handouts. For example, never use a picture or a pattern as a background. If you use a dark background, make sure there is enough contrast between the text and the background so the text stands out and can be read easily.

• **Use headings that are clear and easy to understand** – headings should tell you what the text underneath is about.
• **Don’t give them more information than they need** – it creates excess clutter that they’ll have difficulty filtering out.
Appendix J: Minimizing Distractions Checklist

**Minimizing Distractions Checklist**

There are a number of ways you can minimize distractions and help your participants concentrate. Use this checklist as a guide.

- Keep the room organized and neat (if you have a desk in the room, you’ve removed any clutter, bright objects, props, etc.). You don’t leave things lying around.

- Hang all posters and wall charts at the back of the room (in Correctional Programs at the back of the U). You always try to keep the front of the room clear so that participants can focus on the current topic of discussion.

- Seat the individual away from the window or other noisy areas (e.g., the hallway). You always try to seat them near the front of the room where you speak from.

- Try to select a classroom in a quieter area (if possible) and are mindful of the level of noise in the hallway.

- Minimize talking among participants while you’re speaking and when they are working on assignments.

- Distribute handouts only when they're ready to be used.
Appendix K: Colour Coding as an Organizational Tool

Colour Coding as an Organizational Tool

Colour coding is a simple and effective organizational tool and should be done for handouts (or workbooks) that the individual will be referred to frequently or that they may need to locate quickly. Self Management Plans and the integrated and social skill handouts (e.g., FOCUS, SMART, CPR, etc.) should all be colour coded in Correctional Programs. Not only will this minimize the amount of time spent searching for handouts during group (and distraction to other participants), but it will also help them locate the handouts more easily if they want to refer to them outside of group. In general, lighter colours are best for handouts to ensure the text shows up clearly. The same logic applies to having different coloured notebooks for different subjects in Education Programs.