

Why some people with fetal alcohol exposure don't "get better"!

by
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Why is a supportive environment, positive modelling and "behavior management" with reinforcement for appropriate behavior, and negative consequences for inappropriate behavior sometimes just not effective in altering behavior patterns?

Behavior management isn't "enough" for someone whose developmental disability is such that they are **unable to learn from their own experience**.

The nature of handicapping brain dysfunctions associated with fetal alcohol exposure for some individuals can result in their "living in the moment". Without a sense of "before" and "after," "later" doesn't exist for them. There is only now.

For a person who lives in the moment, they don't have a sense of continuity, or connectedness to their own past and future. Thus, they can not generalize their experience.

For a person who lives in the moment, they can not shift their immediate thought. Whatever is on their mind dominates their actions. They can not see alternatives, or the "other" person's point of view. There is only what is on their own mind right now.

For a person who lives in the moment, they can not resolve their own feelings of conflict. Having a conflict means having two different, opposite feelings, at the same time. Living in the moment, they can only deal with one thing at a time.

They may not be able to resolve conflict, but they know what they do not like. They can tell what is wrong right now. They often are "smarter" than they can act. Being unable to organize themselves towards their own positive goals, they often become overfocused on reacting against what is going on around them that they sense is "wrong", in the moment.

Often they become very emotionally fragile.

For a person who lives in the moment, when they have an "old" memory, it may be reacted to as though it is happening right now.

Waking up in the morning can be like having a Post-Traumatic Stress experience. They often display "conditioned" emotional reactions to "old", negative, triggering events, or anything that reminds them of these.

Living In the moment, they are reactive and absorb the emotions displayed around them. Often they magnify the emotions displayed around them. Often they become "stuck" in an emotion and escalate out of control. They have little ability to "take a step back" to attenuate or modulate their emotional reactions.

They depend on you to rescue them. This is why some people "don't get better."

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