

FASD EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS

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Introduction: In 2011/2012 researchers from the Telethon Kids Institute surveyed WA judicial officers, lawyers, corrective services staff and police on their FASD knowledge and attitudes and practice. This research identified what information is required by justice professionals and how this information should be delivered. Since this research concluded we have been working closely with judicial officers and lawyers on developing an understanding of FASD and the legal implications for people engaging with the justice system. In Australia we are facing challenges from the high incarceration rates of Aboriginal people and people with cognitive impairments, and the introduction of mandatory sentencing which impacts on judicial officers ability to consider 'equality before the law' particularly for people with disabilities.

The purpose of this project was to translate our research, by developing an educational intervention to prepare for the challenges facing judicial officers and lawyers so that they can:

- recognise cognitive impairments and possible FASD in young people engaging with the justice system whether as a victim, witness or offender
- identify legal implications
- consider referral for assessment if the disability is suspected
- consider decision making with respect to orders, sentencing and management

Method: A Steering Group with representation from the Children's Court, legal organisations and the community worked with the project team to develop content for the educational videos and on-line CPD module. These resources were piloted with magistrates and lawyers prior to completion.

Implications for Translational Research: This project used evidence of the need for information for justice professionals on FASD to translate into videos, on-line CPD module for lawyers, updated information on FASD for the WA Bench Book and a website. These resources will be evaluated in late 2015.

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