

Lisa's Baby: FASD Awareness Skit

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This is a skit that can be performed for any audience, any target group. I usually do this at the end of an all-day training. Earlier in the session I perform two other readings, usually right after each of the breaks, to get everyone back on track again. These can be done for awareness events, for class presentations, for dinner speeches, or for just about any gathering. The two preliminary poems are only a few minutes long, and the skit itself only takes about 10 minutes.

The first poem is "Hush Little Baby With FAS" which are lyrics to the song "Hush Little Baby" and can be done by anyone who can carry a tune. I hold the FAS doll that is wrapped in a baby blanket and while facing the baby, I read the lyrics from the sheet that is placed on the table in front of me, so that it looks as if I am singing this to the baby.

The second reading is a poem "Little Mama" that portrays a young woman with undiagnosed alcohol effects. After these readings there is a collective sigh, and I agree out loud that this is indeed sad, and it is what happens with unrecognized, undiagnosed FASD where individuals do not get the support and services they need.

The third item, the grand finale, is the skit "This is the Baby that Lisa Had" which is a take off on the children's story "This is the House that Jack Built" that has a fun rhythm to it. I make it fun by asking for 8 volunteers, one at a time, to play the roles in the skit. First I announce that the volunteers will only be required to stand when their name or role is mentioned and to sit down when they hear me say the word "poisoned." I place 8 chairs at the front of the room, or they can take part in their seats if they have room to stand and sit. It seems to work better if they are all at the front. I make sure that I have the baby bottle with the booze in it that I use to demonstrate that when a pregnant mother takes a drink, so does her baby, as the BAC (blood alcohol content) of the baby is the same as the BAC of the mother. With the baby bottle of booze nearby, I hold the baby and ask for volunteers.

The first volunteer I ask for is someone to play Lisa. "Who would like to be Lisa?" and I hand the baby to "Lisa" and ask her to take a seat at the front. Then I get a volunteer to be Lisa's friend (male friend or boyfriend), then I ask for a bartender, a nightclub owner, an ad writer, a lawyer, a senator, and a lobbyist. If they don't volunteer, pick someone. When all 8 are seated at the front, I tell them that each time they hear me say their name they are to stand, and each time they hear me say "poison" they are to sit down. Then I read "Lisa's Baby." I may have to coach them until they catch the hang of it. I hold up the baby bottle or the booze bottle or a glass of something like tea that looks like booze when I say, "This is the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had." When you get to the lawyer and the lobbyist you can read it fairly fast and everyone will laugh at the ups and downs of the volunteers. Then the last half is more serious. Be dramatic, get the important points across with emphasis and deliberate pronunciation, and don't hurry the important parts.

At the end, have the volunteers form a Circle of Support around Lisa and her baby. Encourage every person to commit to being part of the Circle of Support. Ask for applause for the volunteers. Please acknowledge the author and source.

Hush Little Baby With FAS

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Hush Little Baby With FAS
All this crying gives Mama stress
And if that stress gets really bad
Mama's gonna find you a brand new dad
And if that new dad doesn't stick around
Mama's gonna find you a nice playground
And if those kids won't let you play
Mama's gonna take you down the alley way
And if that alley way has drugs
Mama's gonna make friends with some thugs
And if those thugs give me a drink
Mama's gonna not be able to think
And if your Mama cannot think straight
Mama's gonna make a big mistake
And if that goes against the law
Mama's gonna hide out with your Pa
And if your Pa hurts one of us
Mama's gonna take us to a halfway house
And when that halfway house time is up
Mama will still not be grown up
And if Mama can't grow up very well
Our lives will be hard as hell
And if Mama can't cope with the stress
Someone's gonna call up CPS
And if they take you away from me
Mama's gonna feel so sad and lonely
But Mama won't be alone for long
There's a new little baby and the same sad song

Little Mama's In a Mess

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Little Mama's in a mess,
Cannot cope with all the stress.
Baby's fussing, will not eat,
Now they're living on the street.
Shelter's rules are way too hard,
And she lost her Welfare card.

Now the law is on her tail,
She can't get caught, she can't make bail.
CPS would take away
Her baby, so she runs away.
She ends up with a drunken jerk,
Who's sick himself and cannot work.
His promises she can't resist,
Now she and baby are at risk.

They say she was not brought up well.
It's obvious from the tales they tell.
Her father was too strict with her
And mom was ever worse with her.
They would not let her have her way,
And so she had to run away.

But let's take a closer look
At her Family History Book.

Her mother did the best she could
Her kids' behavior was not good.
Mom did what she thought was right,
But still the kids would yell and fight.

Their stars and points they never earned.
From consequences, they never learned.
Stubborn, impulsive and lazy – but...
Also sweet and affectionate.

Mom loved her kids, she hugged & kissed 'em,
They still got lost in the cracks of the system.

Mom and dad they tried their best,
But still they failed the parenting test.
The kids were always out of control,
The family stress had taken its toll.

Mom found relief with her old friend,
A bottle of wine would help her mend.
It always helped her over the years,
To soothe her stress and calm her fears.
But never during pregnancy.
At least that's what she said to me.
But hubby knows she didn't quit,
And if he told, she'd have a fit.
So no one knows, or even suspects,
That some of their kids have FAS.
Because they're smart, and cute and clever.
Will FAS be diagnosed? Never!

Folks can't see Fetal Alcohol Spectrum
If they all have their heads... buried in the sand
And Little Mama's still in a mess,
Because she and her baby both have FAS.

This is the Baby That Lisa Had

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This is the baby that Lisa had. This is the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

This is the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

This is Nightclub owner that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

This is the Friend that took Lisa to the Nightclub that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

This is the Ad Writer that produced the advertisement that influenced the Friend that took Lisa to the Nightclub that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

This is the Lawyer that wrote the law that allowed the Ad that influenced the Friend that took Lisa to the Nightclub that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

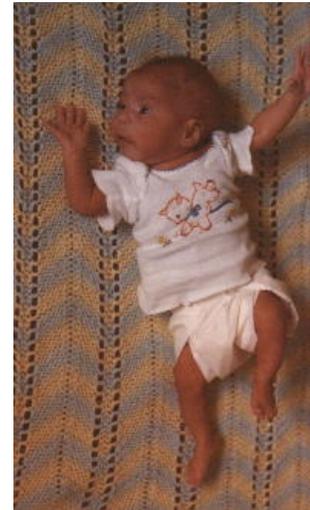
This is the Legislator that passed the Law that allowed the Ad that influenced the Friend that took Lisa to the Nightclub that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

This is the Lobbyist that convinced the Legislator to pass the Law that allowed the Ad that influenced the Friend that took Lisa to the Nightclub that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

These are the people who didn't know or didn't care about the Lobbyist that convinced the Legislator to pass the Law that allowed the Ad that influenced the Friend that took Lisa to the Nightclub that hired the Bartender that served the booze that poisoned the brain of the baby that Lisa had.

So let's not be so quick to blame only the birth mothers for all the babies with poisoned brains who grow up without friends and get kicked out of school and get in trouble with the law and become addicted and get pregnant, who lose their jobs and their homes and their families, and get arrested, or molested, or killed.

Let's look at what we are telling these pregnant mothers. Many doctors are still telling their pregnant patients that one or two drinks won't hurt the baby. One or two drinks won't cause FAS, but one or two binges could cause some damage. One drink might end up being a quart of beer or a stadium cup full of whiskey or a glass of wine that gets filled repeatedly. One little drink per day throughout pregnancy is equivalent to 39 baby bottles full of liquor.



When we tell women not to drink when they're pregnant, we have to be careful that they think they don't have to worry if they are on the pill or if they use a condom, because half of all pregnancies are unplanned, and the failure rate for relying on just one form of birth control, like the pill or the condom, can be as high as 20%, and the failure rate for teens is twice as high.

When we tell women of childbearing age not to drink, we have to be careful that we're not giving the message that men can drink as much as they want and not affect the baby, because men's drinking behavior is a very strong influence on women's drinking behavior, and a man's sobriety is a key factor in helping a woman stay sober during her pregnancy.

Let's look at our own role as citizens, consumers, voters. Let's look at our own attitudes about alcohol as a dangerous drug. Let's look at our own behavior as we celebrate New Year's Eve, Memorial Day, Labor Day, St. Patrick's Day, birthdays, weddings, and the births of new babies.

Let's look at our own example that we model for our kids as we follow (or fail to follow) the recommended limits for healthy drinking. Do you know what those recommendations are? One drink a day for a woman and two drinks a day for a man. Unless they are pregnant, or could possibly get pregnant. Unless they have addiction tendencies. Unless they are on meds like anti-depressants or antihistamines or hundreds of other medications that interact with alcohol. Unless they are from families with a high risk of cancer, or diabetes, or depression, or a number of other health problems. For all those individuals, the safe limit is zero. Did you know that alcohol increases your risk of having a stroke or developing pneumonia, meningitis, and urinary tract infections? Did you know that one drink a day may increase your risk of breast cancer? Nobody has ever died from not drinking. Most of us didn't know all this about alcohol. But this is what we should be teaching our kids.

When we tell them not to drink and drive, we imply that they can drink as much as they want as long as they are not behind the wheel of a car. When we tell them they should not drink if they are under 21, we imply that they can drink as much as they want after they become adults. If you want kids to do something, just tell them they can't because they're kids and they have to wait until they are adults. Kids want to act like adults. Kids will follow our lead. Where are we leading them?

We can either be the people who didn't care about the Lobbyists who persuade our Government leaders who pass the laws that effect young people like Lisa and her friends. We can become aware and informed and do something about the ignorance and denial and misinformation that is out there, so that babies are not poisoned by alcohol. So that every baby can be a baby born free of the effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Every baby can be a baby born free of FASD.

Let's work together, through promoting and participating in FASD Awareness Day, through arranging for a presentation on FASD at your school or agency or center, through being good examples of healthy living for our young people, so that every baby in our community is a baby born free. When you and I make choices about alcohol use, I want those choices to be informed choices, healthy choices, so that every baby can be a baby born free.

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www.fasstar.com

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