

I was born in Powell River in 1975. At the age of 18 months, I was moved to my adopted family. I went to Bench Elementary then to George Bonner; I got as far as grade ten. There were many challenges in school, once I discovered "skipping school" it got harder and harder to attend. In a classroom, it was hard to concentrate but when I was outside playing sports, I found it enjoyable. When it came to decision-making, I made some bad choices especially when it came to spur of the moment stuff with friends. I guess you could say peers easily influenced me.

I was not aware that I had F.A.S.D until my mom got me tested somewhere in Vancouver. From the age of seventeen to twenty four, I was in and out of juvenile detention and jail, mostly because of stupid stuff when partying. It was in jail that I got my GED. There was access to counseling but I did not go until it was mandatory. When I was forced to attend drug and alcohol programs I did not want to be there, I just went through the motions.

Some of the challenges with F.A.S and F.A. E. are that the cops were unaware of such things as poor impulse control. Nowadays they know more about F.A.S.D. The justice system is now making adaptations to sentencing people with F.A.S.D. Instead of jail, they would give me community-based punishment or crime related workshops. Part of my community service was at Providence Farm it gave me a routine I could follow daily. It also worked with the skills I already had and liked, like carpentry and painting. It also paid my debt to society in a positive way, instead of sitting behind bars.

My challenges with employment are with commitment. I work hard for the first two weeks then start to take sick days or make up excuses not to go. Distractions are an issue here too. I get my jobs through family and friends, I have never had a formal interview; being put in the hot seat is hard to handle. I like labour and outdoor work, not fiddling around with small stuff indoors. I prefer jobs that require minimal brain activity and maximum strength.

Welfare recognizes that F.A.S.D. is a disability type 2, the benefits are: there is no annual review, you do not have to take in your stub each month, you can work and earn up to \$400 a month on top of the cheque. Medical and dental are covered through disability 2 and my Indian band.

Obstacles that my family faces is the stress from my court dates and me being in jail. I thought that it was just me going through trouble but looking back, my parents were experiencing it with me. Dad did not say very much about his emotions during that time. He was not a cold person but was not comfortable vocalizing his feelings. My mom always sees the best in everything even in hard times. Mom is supportive and offers help with everything that my partner and me do. Mom attended all of my court appearances and was there for me in every conflict. An example would be the time she drove to Victoria for 8 a.m. to pick me up after being discharged from the police station. Mom checked out

apartments with us and made sure living conditions were suitable. My whole family supports me the best they can even my brothers and sisters. Hopefully more people will learn and understand F.A.S.D The more people that know the better.