

# Developing and Maintaining a Positive Focused System of Care

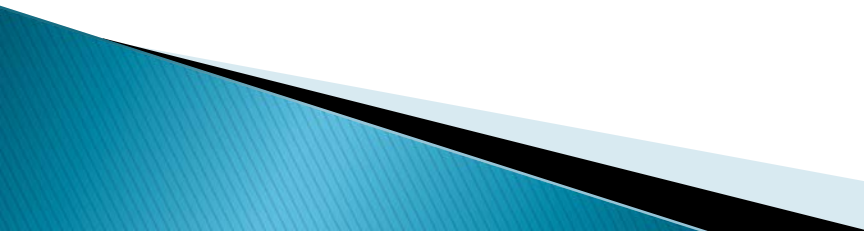
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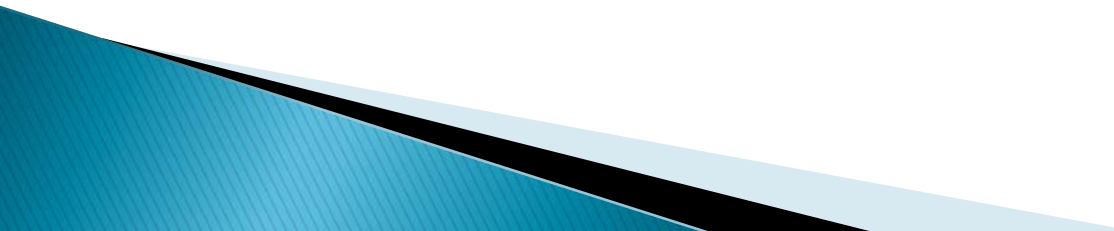
# Issues in Addressing Behaviors

- ▶ Many people think that if we find the right motivating factor, the person will do what we want them to
  - ▶ We use what the person likes to do and does well as the motivating factor
  - ▶ If he or she does not respond, we say that we haven't found the right motivating factor
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# Issues in Addressing Behaviors

- ▶ Although this approach may work for some people, it is not effective with many with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and many others
- ▶ If someone has difficulty in abstract thinking, they often do not know why they do not get the rewards
- ▶ There are really only two explanations if one does not get cause and effect
  - People are mean for no reason
  - They are “bad”

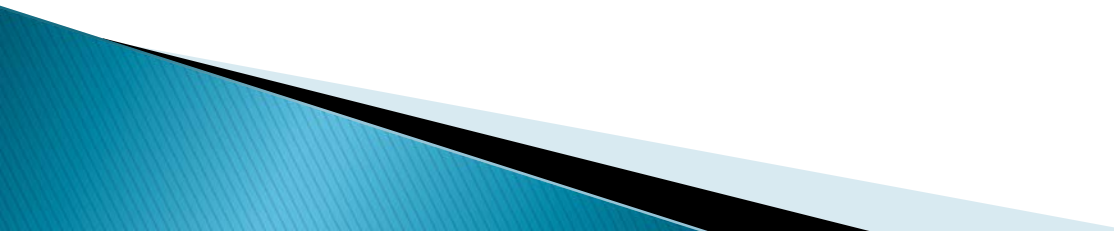
# Issues in Addressing Behaviors

- ▶ With repeated similar experiences, thinking they are “bad” may become their self image
  - ▶ People work hard at doing things to support their self image
  - ▶ Much of this is not conscious
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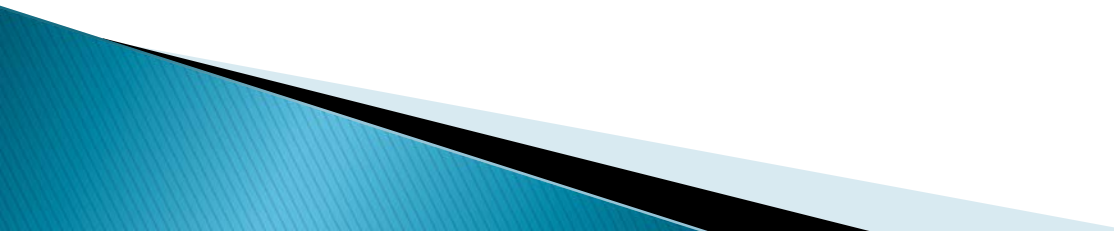
# Issues in Addressing Behaviors

- ▶ We are a problem based society
  - ▶ Professionals get paid for dealing with problems
  - ▶ Meetings focus on problems
  - ▶ Policies, procedures, and handbooks for many treatment programs focus on negative approaches
    - Consequences for certain behaviors
    - Many rules and what happens when they are broken
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# Issues in Addressing Behaviors

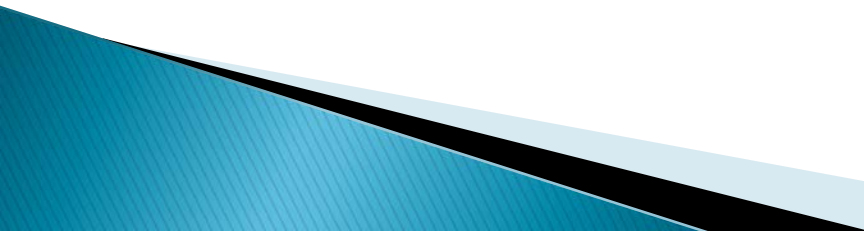
- ▶ Many individuals with an FASD, as well as many with other disabilities that manifest behaviorally, those with substance use disorders, and those with mental illness have repeatedly heard what they do wrong throughout their lives
  - ▶ They rarely hear what they do right
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# Issues in Addressing Behaviors

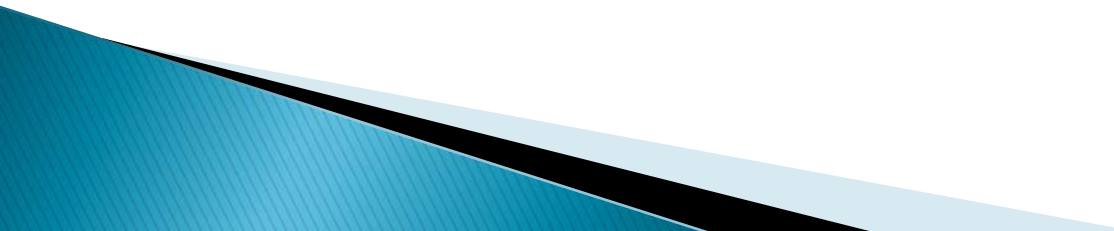
- ▶ We need to change our approach
  - ▶ We need to incorporate a true strengths based approach to everyone
  - ▶ Identifying strengths and abilities needs to be foremost
  - ▶ We need to move towards a positive focused system
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# A Positive Focused System

- ▶ Utilize a true strengths based approach
    - Identify strengths and abilities
    - Focus on building strengths and abilities
  - ▶ Consistently tell the person what she or he does well and is good at
    - This is an ongoing process
  - ▶ Point out small accomplishments
  - ▶ This does not mean ignoring challenging behaviors
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# A Positive Focused System

- ▶ Revise policies and procedures to be more positively focused
  - ▶ Revise client handbooks to utilize more positive language and convey the concept that those in the program have strengths and abilities that the program will focus on supporting and growing
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# Strengths

- ▶ The first step in helping someone to succeed is to identify strengths and abilities
  - ▶ Everyone has strengths
  - ▶ Sometimes, they get the person into difficulty
  - ▶ There are times when the individual and those around cannot identify any strengths
  - ▶ Our systems do not encourage the identification of strengths
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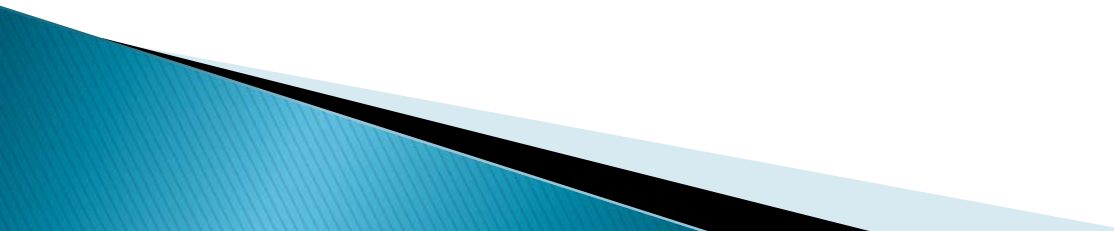
# A Strengths Based Approach to Improving Outcomes

- ▶ Identify strengths and desires in the individual
  - What do they do well?
  - What do they like to do?
  - What are their best qualities?
  - What are your funniest experiences with them?
- ▶ Identify strengths in the family
- ▶ Identify strengths in the providers
- ▶ Identify strengths in the community
  - Include cultural strengths in the community


# Developing a Positive Focused System

- ▶ Examine current approaches for negatives
    - Rules
    - Policies
    - Responses to behaviors
  - ▶ Discuss how each could be modified to take a more positive tack
  - ▶ For programs, the buy in has to be on all levels
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# Developing a Positive Focused System

- ▶ Focus on the positives
  - ▶ Implement whatever component you can
    - Telling people what they do well consistently
    - Reducing the number of rules
    - Modifying policies to use more positive language
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# Maintaining a Positive Focused System

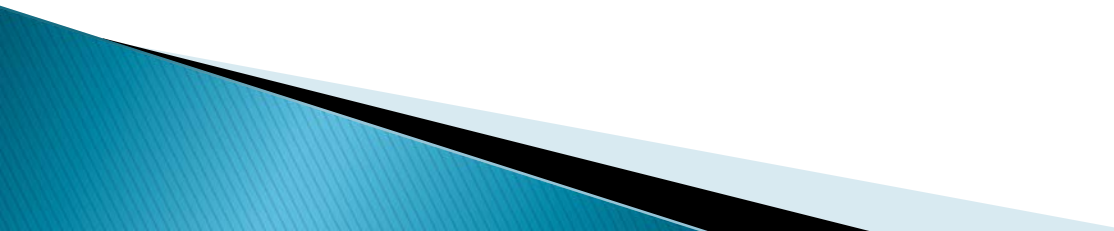
- ▶ In a program, establish ongoing support from the CEO
  - ▶ Model a positive focused system in all you do
  - ▶ Provide supervision to examine daily processes and support change
    - Review approaches and discuss modifications
    - Ensure you are modeling a positive, non-judgmental approach
  - ▶ Change is not easy
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# Maintaining a Positive Focused System

- ▶ Validate efforts
    - Even small attempts need to be acknowledged
    - Support families and providers
  - ▶ Document responses to positive approaches
  - ▶ Educate systems that come into contact with individuals with FASD about the importance of utilizing a positive system
  - ▶ Don't be afraid to ask others for help
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# Final Thoughts to Keep in Mind

- ▶ We want to help people succeed
    - “Whatever it takes” is an important attitude
    - Ask the question “what does this person need in order to be successful (function at his or her best) and how do we help him or her achieve that
    - Identify how to help the family be successful
  - ▶ We need to foster **interdependence**
  - ▶ FASD is a human issue
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# FASD Is a Human Issue

- ▶ It's essential to “really care”
  - ▶ People with “difficult” behaviors and their families have great potential
  - ▶ We need reminders of what has been accomplished
    - Especially when things are not going well
  - ▶ Always remember that addressing these behaviors differently can be a matter of life or death
    - What you do concerning this issue can save lives!
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