

WHAT LIES BENEATH!

Understanding the brain areas impacted in young people with FASD will help you to better understand many other brain-related conditions. If you can understand and support a young person with FASD, you are on the road to supporting everyone!



DIAGNOSIS	BRAIN AND BODY DOMAINS IMPACTED											
	ADAPTIVE FUNCTION (everyday skills of life e.g., social skills, self-care, concepts of time and money etc)	EXECUTIVE FUNCTION (e.g., impulsivity, organisation, linking cause and effect, working memory)	ATTENTION*	AFFECT (e.g., depression, anxiety, emotional regulation)	ACADEMIC (numeracy and literacy)	LANGUAGE (use and understanding)	COGNITION (e.g., IQ, processing speed, problem solving)	MEMORY	MOTOR SKILLS (fine and gross motor, visuo-motor)	BRAIN STRUCTURE	SENSORY	PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES (e.g., malformations and deformities, heart issues etc)
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓
Impairment in a minimum of three brain related domains is required for diagnosis of FASD in Australia but most children with FASD have more (average = 4)												
ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓
No minimum no of domains required												
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER	✓	?		?		✓					✓	
ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER	✓	?	✓									
OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER	✓	?		✓								
ANXIETY, DEPRESSION & PTSD	✓			✓								
DISRUPTIVE MOOD DISORDER	✓	?		✓								
INTERMITTENT EXPLOSIVE DISORDER	✓	?		✓								
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDER	✓				✓	?						
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	✓	?			?	✓			?			
SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER	✓							✓		✓		
REACTIVE ATTACHMENT DISORDER	✓	?		✓								
PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders associated with streptococcal infections)	✓	?	?	✓				✓				✓

Note categories are based on key diagnostic criteria not on comorbid conditions. For example, many people with ASD also have ADHD and anxiety however this is not included in the diagnostic criteria. Boxes with a ? indicate that these brain areas are implicated and often assessed for within the diagnoses but not explicitly stated as a diagnostic criteria. You will note for most diagnoses except FASD, ABI and PANDAS, diagnostic criteria describe rather than provide an explanation for why certain symptoms and behavioural symptoms occur. Vanessa Spiller (2021).