

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Information for Friends and Family

Your support and understanding is very important to us. It takes a community to raise a child, and in our particular case, we need you more than ever!

Children, youth, and adults with FASD have brains that are wired very differently, and the disabilities are often hidden behind a beautiful face with a kind and loving soul which makes some of the puzzling and problematic behaviour even more difficult to understand. People with FASD need nonjudgmental friends and family members who accept them as they are and will do their best to protect them from danger and from making poor decisions while leaving them feeling valued and dignified. Friends and family members will be very helpful if they can encourage our children, youth, and adults without demanding that they grow and respond as other people 'should'. Friends and family members will be so helpful and appreciated if they can help us rejoice in the strengths and the accomplishments of our loved one.

Common needs for all people and especially for those experiencing FASD:

- Someone who believes in them
- Safe, modified environments
- Unconditional love and acceptance
- Calm, supportive redirection
- Patience and understanding
- Assistance with emotional regulation
- Structure and predictability
- Attention and close supervision



Tips for helping our person feel good about themselves and to reach their potential:

- Understand the difference between 'I can't' versus 'I won't'
- Listen carefully, and acknowledge the frustration
- Realize that our child's memory and perception is often different than ours
- Limit the 'jokes' and teasing, as it often leaves our children confused and feeling badly
- Get involved in their interests
- Always remember that this is brain damage, and that you would not likely be so angry with someone with Down's Syndrome for example or another more visible disability
- Help them to identify and praise their strengths

Please understand that we may need to avoid certain things, but it is not that we are disinterested or lacking in consideration. Instead, we are needing to protect our person from over-stimulation and from difficult situations that they are not able to deal with successfully or safely at this time.

We may not be able to attend things like: Holidays, Birthday parties, music concerts, large crowds, air shows, sporting events etc. We know our child/adolescent/adult, and are not over-protecting, or coddling. These activities are simply too much for our children, youth and adults to handle at times. It is our job to protect our loved ones and this is what we are doing.

We may need your help - It is both rewarding and exhausting to care for an individual with a FASD. We may need some time away to re-boot and regain some rest and energy from time to time and would appreciate knowing that you would enjoy the opportunity to be a significant part of our person's lives and development. Many thanks...

