

Language Matters

Talking about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

FASD is a developmental disability. Like other people with disabilities, people with FASD have many strengths and skills and can lead happy and productive lives. The language we use can challenge stereotypes about people with FASD, promote compassion for women who drank during their pregnancy (for whatever reason), and help others to see people with FASD as more than a disability.



Use



Individual with FASD, person with FASD;

Affected by FASD, impacted by FASD;

Cognitive or neurodevelopmental disability;

Children with FASD.

Avoid



Suffering from FASD, damaged by FASD, living with FASD;

Afflicted by;

Mentally disabled;

FASD kids.

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Talking about Alcohol and Pregnancy

Women drink alcohol during pregnancy for a wide range of reasons, including not knowing they are pregnant, lack of information about the harms of alcohol during pregnancy, and problems with alcohol and drug use. The language we use can help women feel safe to ask questions about alcohol use during pregnancy, seek help if they are having difficulties stopping their use, and challenge stereotypes about people with FASD.

Use



Women who use alcohol and drugs;

Babies born with FASD, children affected by FASD;

Parents, caregivers, women who use alcohol during pregnancy;

She reported drinking alcohol during pregnancy, she confirmed alcohol use.

Avoid



Alcoholics, addicts, women who choose to drink;

Babies are innocent victims, children who are injured by their mother's drinking;

Women who drink are irresponsible, mothers who make poor choices, women who don't care about their children;

She admitted to alcohol use, she denied alcohol use.

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Building Awareness – FASD Prevention Campaign Slogans

The language we use in alcohol and pregnancy campaigns should be balanced, informative, and accurately reflect current research about the known risks of alcohol use during pregnancy. While the health of an unborn baby can be a powerful motivation to stop drinking during pregnancy, slogans that suggest women who drink alcohol are uncaring or irresponsible can create shame and guilt, and prevent women who need help with their drinking, from seeking support. It can also increase anxiety and fear for women who drank before they knew they were pregnant.

Use



If you are pregnant, no alcohol is the safest choice;

FASD can be preventable;

It is safest not to drink during pregnancy.
Or No safe time, No safe kind, No safe amount;

Pregnant? It's never too late to get the facts about alcohol and pregnancy.

Avoid



Any alcohol can harm your unborn baby;

FASD is 100% preventable;

When you drink during pregnancy so does your unborn baby. Or When you drink, they drink;

Just one drink can cause FASD.

Images Matter Too

Using Images When Talking About Alcohol, Pregnancy & FASD

Photos, illustrations, animations, and other graphics can be powerful tools for communication. When talking about alcohol, pregnancy, and FASD, we can choose images that evoke certain emotions, that emphasize key messages or ideas, or that reflect our values and beliefs. When choosing and using images, especially graphic images or fear-based images, it's important to consider and minimize unintended consequences such as reinforcing stereotypes about individuals affected by FASD. This can make it more difficult for women with alcohol use disorders to seek help, or create fear for women who drank alcohol before they knew they were pregnant.

Use



Images of individuals with FASD leading productive and meaningful lives;

Images of healthy babies;

Images of women from diverse backgrounds (as a reminder that FASD affects all groups of women who drink alcohol);

Images that emphasize the health and well-being of both babies and mothers;

Images of pregnant women with partners, friends, and other community members (implying that many people may be a part of preventing FASD).

Avoid



Images only of individuals with FASD in jail, homeless, or experiencing mental health problems;

Images of a baby drinking alcohol or a fetus floating in alcohol;

Images of pregnant women without clothing (this can be offensive to some) or with a red slash superimposed across an image of a pregnant woman;

Images only of pregnant bellies (don't only focus on the fetus);

Images of pregnant women partying or drinking heavily (implying that they are uncaring or irresponsible).