

Everyone Plays A Part: It Takes a Community Improving FASD Awareness Across Canada

Information Package



We all know that we need more support for FASD prevention, diagnosis, and support across the country. While we are making progress, there is still so much more to be done. FASD Day and FASD Month are great opportunities to bring attention to FASD nationally and internationally. However, we need to be united to encourage our leaders and community members to raise awareness of FASD in Canada.

Community leaders and organizations across the country have done a great job creating awareness events in their own cities and regions. But, we want to make sure there is consistency across Canada in the messages that we're sharing about FASD and the prevention of alcohol use in pregnancy during the month of September and beyond.

At CanFASD, we're working hard on developing a consistent message for FASD awareness. We want to make sure this message is non-stigmatizing, strengths-based and aligns with the best practices outlined in research.

Our past, current, and future themes for FASD Awareness Month are grounded in research and best practices to make sure that the work we're doing is moving FASD and prevention forward. Our hope is that our movement grows and catalyzes new policies, programs, and awareness. Our theme this year is *'Everyone Plays a Part: It Takes a Community'*. Read on to learn how you can help.

Everyone Plays a Part



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a very complex issue that intersects with so many different fields. 'Everyone Plays a Part' goes beyond framing FASD as an individual issue, as the impacts of FASD matter to the whole community. We all have a part to play and need to work together to spark change.

Everyone plays a part in supporting healthy pregnancies. Everyone plays a part in shaping a society that is inclusive of people with FASD. Everyone plays a part this FASD Awareness Month!

Why "everyone"?



Evidence has shown that promoting "Interdependence" is likely to take the emphasis away from individual women and individual people with FASD and bring the focus instead to society as a whole. As highlighted in the [Frameworks report](#) on communications about FASD, "the public tends to blame women for causing FASD and see people with FASD as "other" and separate from society, but framing the issue with Interdependence can encourage thinking about the connections among us".

We want the public to realize that everyone has actions they can take for FASD and the prevention of alcohol use during pregnancy. It is in all of our interests that this issue is taken seriously - a society that cares for pregnant women and people with FASD is a society that will be fairer for everyone.



It Takes a Community

When we talk about community, we mean more than professionals. Community includes families, friends, neighbours, cultural communities, schools, workplaces, and communities of practice – the many people and networks that surround and support individuals every day.

Supporting people with FASD and promoting alcohol-free pregnancies is a shared responsibility. When we work together, we create environments where people feel supported, valued, and able to succeed. This year's theme celebrates the strength, connection, and belonging that communities create. By learning, supporting one another, and sharing knowledge, communities can help individuals with FASD across their lifespan and promote healthy pregnancies.

Supporting healthy pregnancies

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is complex and there are lots of reasons why alcohol use during pregnancy may occur. Many people still believe that prevention is as simple as "stopping drinking during pregnancy", but this negates the realities of women and pregnant people's lives. These misconceptions can lead to narrow and stigmatizing approaches rather than multidimensional, respectful, and engaging approaches.

Social determinants of health such as poverty, nutrition, access to prenatal care, physical environment, and housing all increase the risk of alcohol-exposed pregnancies. As do experiences of violence, trauma, grief, adverse childhood experiences stress, and isolation. Working together to provide holistic, health promoting responses to these complex and interconnected influences are vital to preventing alcohol use during pregnancy.

Supporting people with FASD

Communities thrive when everyone feels supported - and that includes people with FASD. Each of us has a role to play in creating a more inclusive, understanding environment where individuals with FASD can lead happy, fulfilling lives.

By coming together - families, educators, service providers, and neighbours - we can help ensure people with FASD have access to the supports and services they need. Research shows that with the right supports in place, individuals with FASD can truly thrive. It takes collective action across our communities and systems to make this a reality. When we work together, we build stronger, more compassionate communities for everyone.

Rock Red for FASD



We are asking key landmarks and monuments across Canada to light up red on September 9th in honour of FASD Awareness Day. These monuments include:

- Calgary Tower, Calgary, AB
- High Level Bridge, Edmonton, AB
- Telus Spark, Calgary, AB
- Hub Mall, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
- Lethbridge City Hall, Lethbridge, AB
- BC Place, Vancouver, BC
- Maple Ridge City Hall, BC
- Port Coquitlam City Hall, BC
- Sails of Lights, Vancouver, BC
- Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC
- Fraser River Walking Bridge, Quesnel, BC
- Winnipeg 3D Sign & Esplanade Riel, Winnipeg, MB
- 3D Toronto Sign, Toronto, ON
- CN Tower, Toronto, ON
- London City Hall, London, ON
- Niagara Falls, ON
- Peace Bridge, Niagara Falls, ON
- Toronto City Hall, Toronto, ON
- Kingston City Hall, ON
- Newfoundland City Hall, St. Johns, NL
- Confederation Building, St. Johns, NL
- Downing Street, Downtown Place, Avenir Centre, Moncton, NB

Help add to this list! Reach out to landmarks and monuments in your local city and ask them to light up their building red on September 9th in recognition of FASD Awareness Day. We will be using the HEX colour: #FF0000 (red). If you need more details, email info@canfasd.ca. Did you reach out to a monument that agreed to rock red for FASD? [Fill out this form](#) and we will add it to our list!

Social Media Movement



Wear your red shoes on FASD Awareness Day (September 9th) and throughout the month of September to bring attention to FASD and raise awareness about this disability.

Don't have red shoes? That's okay! Add a red shirt or red pants to your outfit instead. Be sure to share on social media with the hashtag #RedShoesRock! Along with your red shoes, take this opportunity to share what "Everyone Plays a Part: It Takes a Community!" means to you using #FASDMonth and don't forget to tag CanFASD on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!

Community Events



Hosting events in your community is a great way to connect with others to raise awareness about FASD. If you are planning an event, be sure to follow all the rules and regulations of your local municipality.

Here are some ideas for community events that other organizations across Canada have done to celebrate FASD Awareness Day and FASD Awareness Month:

- Ask your local bars and restaurants to serve an FASD Awareness Month themed mocktail.
- Run an awareness walk
 - Plan a walk through your city with a group. You can make a big impression by starting or ending your walk at an important landmark, like your local city hall. You can also dress in red and wear signs to bring attention to FASD Awareness Day.
- Partner with a local food chain
 - Previously, advocates and community members have collaborated with popular fast food restaurants to share FASD Awareness Month tray mats
- Host a mocktail competition to see who in your community can create the tastiest alcohol-free beverage!
- Organize a community treasure hunt
 - Celebrate your favorite local businesses while also spreading awareness of FASD!
- Host a community barbecue or lunch
 - Previously, communities have hosted barbecues or [food truck lunches](#) to raise awareness of FASD
- [Post lawn signs, posters, or billboards](#)
 - Previously advocates and community members have put up billboard ads and signs on the sides of buses or even passed around lawn signs in their community in honor of FASD Awareness Day and Month.
 - Ask your local bars, restaurants and community spaces to put up prevention posters.
- [Paint rocks red](#)
 - Organizations painted rocks red with information about FASD and left these rocks on local trails for other people within their area to discover.
- [Go see the lights](#)
 - Are you in a community where something is being lit up red for FASD? Gather a group and go see the lights.
- Make sure you invite everyone!
 - When hosting an event, don't just stick to your usual circles. Speak to local businesses and other organizations and ask them to come to your awareness event.

Are you hosting an event in your community? CanFASD can help spread the word. Tell us [what, when, and where](#). We will share it on our channels to help community members get involved.

Note: CanFASD reserves the right to restrict distribution of certain events. As a not-for-profit, we will not promote for-profit events. CanFASD is not affiliated with events on this list.

Next Steps



Like you, we want to see more support for FASD in Canada. Our voices are loud, but we can say so much more when we unite our voices and leverage our strengths. Our goal with this campaign is to connect organizations and advocates across the country to create one united voice for FASD. Our governments and leaders need to hear us and make changes to increase supports and services across Canada.

But we need your help. Our goal with this package is to do the legwork with the research and messaging to free up some of your own resources and time to create additional buzz around FASD Awareness Month.