

2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT



WHO WE ARE

The Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network (CanFASD) is a network of stakeholders from across Canada focused on addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). We are a national and charitable organization that supports research and knowledge exchange initiatives to inform evidence-based policies and practices.

CanFASD's unique partnership brings together researchers, students, practitioners, policymakers, families, and communities across Canada and internationally to address the complexities of FASD. Our research teams currently lead over 50 major projects in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, intervention, justice, and child welfare.

Together.
Finding answers.
Improving outcomes.

VISION

All Canadians are engaged and united with awareness, evidence and knowledge and are effectively addressing the complexities of FASD.

MISSION

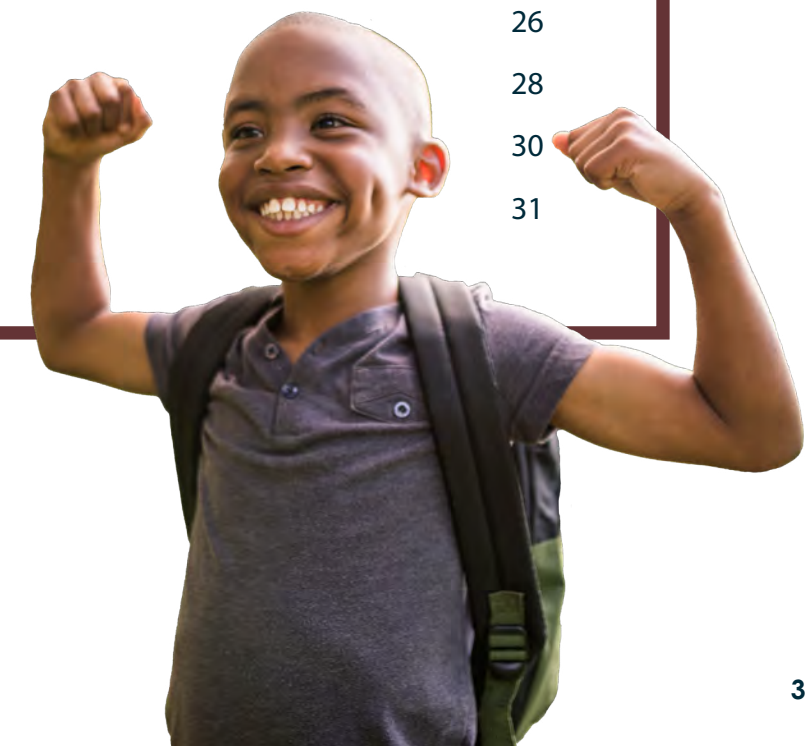
CanFASD supports Canada's leadership, across all sectors and at all levels, in addressing the extraordinary complexities of FASD.

The Network does this through producing and sustaining national collaborative research, shared with all Canadians, focusing primarily on the critical areas of prevention, intervention and diagnosis.

The work of the Network leads to increasingly effective prevention strategies and practice and improved support for people affected by FASD.

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TOGETHER FOR FASD

An Atlantic Canada Conference

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and the isolation many of us experienced, we realize the value of in person connection in exchanging knowledge, inspiring ideas, and helping grow hope, excitement, and curiosity. To encourage this connection and build partnerships, we hosted a one-day conference on FASD in Moncton, New Brunswick on June 9, 2022.

The *Together for FASD Conference* was an opportunity to share knowledge, empower connection and inspire action to address the complexities of FASD in the Atlantic provinces. It featured presentations from Dr. Jacqueline Pei, the CanFASD Senior Research Lead, Audrey McFarlane, CanFASD's Executive Director, and the Lakeland Centre for FASD, the 2021 Claudette Bradshaw Award recipient. The event also included two panel presentations: one on living experience with FASD and one on Atlantic FASD services.

We were thrilled at the turnout. The venue was packed to overflowing, with more interest in the event than we had capacity for. Over 200 service providers, professionals, advocates, experts,

researchers, individuals with FASD, parents, and caregivers were in attendance. There was representation from every Atlantic province, although clear bias towards provinces like New Brunswick, where FASD is more widely recognized.

During the opening session, New Brunswick's Minister of Health, Dorothy Shepard, announced an additional \$800,000 in funding for the New Brunswick FASD Centre of Excellence. Much of these funds will be allocated towards diagnostic services for the province. New Brunswick is the only province in Atlantic Canada that is a jurisdictional member of CanFASD. Although this conference highlighted successes and achievements in FASD across the Atlantic, it's clear that New Brunswick's connection and support from a national research network puts them far ahead of the curve when it comes to serving individuals with FASD and their families.

This event was a resounding success and was the launching point for us to foray into a national event for FASD. Our national event, the Canada FASD Conference, is coming to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in November 2023.



CONFERENCE SNAPSHOTS



Credit: Ben Champoux Photography

Organizing Partners



Message from the BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Olecia Walker, Board Chair

I am truly humbled and filled with pride to step into the role of Board Chair for the Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network (CanFASD). Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) continues to present significant challenges for all of those affected, including individuals, families, caregivers, and communities. CanFASD's role is to generate data and evidence that can lead to sustained action and support.

Our Board of Directors is made up of a dedicated group of individuals. Each, in their own way, offers great insight and support to the organization. This year, with regret, the Board accepted the completion of Tim Moorhouse's term as Board Chair and Lisa Brownstone's as Director. Mr. Moorhouse's valuable expertise and long-standing dedication provided the constancy CanFASD needed to grow, expand, and position itself as a leader in the field of FASD. Ms. Brownstone's devotion to the improvement of service delivery and accessibility and to the dissemination of research findings often served as a guiding light for the Board of Directors, and the organization as whole. While we will miss their expertise and commitment, we are pleased to welcome Shana Mohr to the Board of Directors. Her professional and personal experience in the field will prove integral to ensuring our work meets the needs of those who need it most.

I am constantly amazed at this organization's capacity to bring people together with a shared goal. Work done by CanFASD is the result of the ongoing dedication of staff supported by the involvement of our very talented Research Leads, our Family Advisory Committee, the Alumni and Ambassador Committees, as well as the contributions by the Adults with FASD Expert Collaboration Team. CanFASD has built a strong network of stakeholders and partners, both nationally and internationally that we continue to learn from and collaborate with. CanFASD's goal remains to ensure that all our efforts have a direct benefit to families, caregivers and individuals, practitioners, and policymakers.

This report is a snapshot of just some of CanFASD's incredible successes over the past year. A major focus of 2022 was the development of Bill S-253 supporting a National Framework for FASD, which was tabled in October 2022. If passed, the

National Framework for FASD will be a major pillar for a collaborative and unified approach towards the diagnosis and support services for people and families living with FASD both provincially and nationally. In addition to supporting the development of this Bill, over the past year CanFASD also lead FASD research in Canada, elevated the voices of those with lived experience, supported knowledge exchange opportunities with various workforces, and hosted FASD-specific events across the country. These initiatives lead to improved awareness and understanding of FASD and more effective supports and services for individuals, families, and those who are pregnant and parenting.

Finally, I would like to, once again, express my pleasure to have the opportunity to serve as Board Chair. Since joining CanFASD in 2015, I have had the pleasure to meet many dedicated individuals whose

unique contributions, from across Canada and beyond, make up the underpinnings of CanFASD's ongoing efforts to promote awareness, improve understanding, and inform appropriate supports and services.

As a Board, we understand that we cannot achieve success alone. The ongoing collaborations CanFASD has with many agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals is essential to our success, our achievements, and our future. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincerest gratitude to everyone who has chosen to walk this path with us. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and support of CanFASD and the work that we do.

Sincerely,
Olecia Walker

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Olecia Walker



Tim Moorhouse



Alan Bocking



Wenda Bradley



Carol Anne
Cheechoo



Darren Joslin



David Brown



Christian Whalen



Shana Mohr



Message from the SENIOR RESEARCH LEAD

Dr. Jacqueline Pei

I was asked recently, “Why do you do this work? Why FASD?” Asked with earnestness and interest, the question gave me pause. I attempted to explain the excitement associated with the field as research continues to accelerate, the opportunities to contribute to new learning grow, and our field expands... but then I stopped.

Although accurate answers, they didn’t feel entirely correct. Finally, I simply said, “It’s the people.” And I meant it. Nowhere do I experience a greater opportunity to engage meaningfully with people, of all different spaces and experiences, than within the field of FASD research and, more specifically, within the supportive umbrella of integrated work provided by CanFASD.

Collaborative and interdisciplinary research is increasingly called for within the academic community. At CanFASD, it is simply the way of doing business. This year has been no exception. Partnerships between community members, researchers, and policymakers continue to be the foundation of many ongoing and new projects.

In previous years, I’ve appreciated the opportunity to highlight such initiatives, and this year is no exception. I am especially excited about the way in which these ongoing collaborative projects are closely tied to community, with the goal of moving research into action.

Dr. Poole continues to lead national and international FASD prevention initiatives, helping us to think broadly and compassionately. Her team was excited to launch a digital handbook that will support the delivery of Prevention Levels 3 and 4. The National FASD Database is flourishing under Dr. Cook’s guidance and with the support of the many participating clinics. This data is enhancing our understanding of FASD in Canada and is the backbone of many current and future projects.

Dr. Mela continues to lead efforts to shape best practices in medication use for those with FASD. He is currently developing a mobile application for his medication algorithm as a knowledge translation strategy for clinicians. Dr. McLachlan is supporting many justice-based initiatives, one which involves working with community partners to develop screening tools for early identification of FASD to ensure justice responses are FASD-informed. Dr. Hanlon-Dearman continues to advance understanding of the presentation of FASD in early childhood. Intervention efforts remain a key focus for me. I have appreciated opportunities to partner with community members and researchers to develop FASD-informed resources for substance use treatment and housing to enhance service delivery in these areas.

There have also been many new initiatives this year, and I will highlight a few. Dr. Badry, in partnership with Canadian and Australian colleagues, has contributed a chapter to the latest book from the Prairie Child Welfare Consortium, *Walking Together: The Future of Indigenous Child Welfare on the Prairies*, which was published in September 2022. Dr. Mela has also been busy communicating and influencing those in his profession. He finished an invited editorial in a prominent forensic psychiatry journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and has been engaged in training initiatives across multiple sites. I have also had the pleasure of working with Dr. Harding on a neurodiversity project seeking to navigate the complexity of this topic and work towards both philosophical considerations and practical implications of this movement to the field of FASD.

Mental health has also been a prominent theme over this past year. I am excited about working closely with colleagues on a longitudinal project in which we are seeking to understand mental health trajectories (intersections of brain development,

cognitive functioning, and mental health) in youth with FASD. Additionally, researchers have engaged in specialized work, such as work highlighting risk factors such as suicide for those with FASD (Harding, Badry); in fact, their recent publication in this area was featured on the “top ten downloaded articles in the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry” list for last year.

CanFASD also hosted a second “Weaving, Beading and Braiding” webinar in partnership with our friends in Australia and featuring Dr. Tremblay, who led a conversation about engaging in research with Indigenous communities with partners from northern and eastern Canada. This event was again well received, and the next WBB webinar is planned for August 2023.

I want to conclude this report by sharing my gratitude for the opportunity to act as Senior Research Lead for the past four years. It has been a tremendous experience to sit in this role and gain greater awareness of the outstanding research conducted in association with CanFASD. It is truly a remarkable group of people. I am excited to return to my role leading the Intervention Network Action Team and look forward to many years ahead of working with CanFASD. It is with excitement that I look forward to welcoming our new Senior Research Lead, Dr. Jocelynn Cook!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jacqueline Pei

Dr. Jacqueline Pei presents at the Together for FASD Conference.
Photo by Ben Champoux Photography.

MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH Team

Nowhere do I experience a greater opportunity to engage meaningfully with people, of all different spaces and experiences, than within the field of FASD research, and more specifically within the supportive umbrella of integrated work provided by CanFASD.

*Dr. Jacqueline Pei, Senior Research Lead
CanFASD Research Network*



Dr. Jacqueline Pei
Senior Research Lead &
Intervention Research
Lead



Dr. Jocelynn Cook
National Database
Research Lead



Dr. Kaitlyn McLachlan
Justice Research
Lead



Dr. Nancy Poole
Prevention Research
Lead



Dr. Dorothy Badry
Child Welfare
Research Lead



Dr. Ana Hanlon-Dearman
Diagnostics
Research Co-Lead



Dr. Mansfield Mela
Diagnostics
Research Co-Lead



Dr. Melissa Tremblay
Indigenous Advisor



Audrey McFarlane
Executive Director



Kathy Unsworth
Managing Director



Dr. Kelly Coons-Harding
Director of Research
Administration



Dr. Katherine Flannigan
Research Associate



Lindsay Wolfson
Research Associate



Andrew Wrath
Research Assistant



Kirsten Morrison
Research Assistant



Victoria Bailey
Communications
Manager



Edward Swatschek
Manager of Corporate
Services &
Administration



Samantha Csuahy
Conference and Event
Coordinator



Rochelle Blaak-Herron
Administrative
Assistant



Fiona Binns
Communications
Coordinator

Update from the

FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Family Advisory Committee of the CanFASD Research Network was created in 2014 with the two-fold mandate of advising CanFASD on research priorities for families impacted by FASD and assisting in translating the results of research to ensure they are accessible to families. Within this mandate, the FAC has been engaged in many different activities over the past year.

We have collaborated in the development of several research projects with CanFASD Research Leads and other FASD researchers, including studies examining:

- the strengths of individuals with FASD;
- the perceived effects of cannabis use in adults with FASD;
- Caregiver Approaches, Resiliencies, and Experiences raising individuals with FASD (the CARE study);
- protective factors and outcomes for justice-

involved youth; and

- other justice-related research projects.

We also represent the voice of caregivers on committees for projects like the co-creating housing solutions project, and one focused on developing resources for mental health professionals.

In addition, we published two articles in the *Journal of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* as part of CanFASD's Special Issue. These research articles explored the importance of including the voice of individuals with lived experience in all phases of the research process and the barriers faced by those with lived experience who wish to collaborate in FASD research.

Our New Brunswick representative, Alicia Munn, acted as the co-Master of Ceremonies at the Together for FASD Conference in Moncton in June 2022 (pictured below). We were also pleased to present a session on the rights of individuals with FASD at the *International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child* around the same time.

In addition to our work with CanFASD, our committee members are active in their local areas, enhancing awareness and understanding



FAC members left to right: Alicia Munn (New Brunswick), Tammy Roberts, Co-chair (Northwest Territories), Shana Mohr (former Saskatchewan rep), Ray Marnoch (former Yukon rep), Wanda Beland (Alberta), Dorothy Reid, Co-chair (British Columbia) and Marsha Wilson (British Columbia). Absent are Simon Laplante (Manitoba), Noah Noah (Nunavut), and Pam Belanger (Saskatchewan). Shana and Ray retired from the Family Advisory Committee in 2022. We thank them for the many years of involvement in the committee. Pam Belanger has replaced Shana and we welcome her as our newest member.

of FASD. FAC members are involved in a variety of presentations and training events and leading various activities during FASD Awareness Month in September.

We often feel crazy as we advocate year after year for the services and supports required to help our loved ones live the lives we know they are capable of. But yet we wait, and we hope. As caregivers, we need to be heard and believed. Hope is not enough, and waiting is draining.

There have been some changes. The amount of applied research on FASD is increasing significantly. Educational platforms such as the learning portal of CanFASD provide excellent, empirically based information on FASD for a variety of professions, including those involved in the justice system, child welfare system, and educational system. Standardized training and supports are available for diagnostic clinics. But we are still waiting for knowledge and awareness to consistently translate into better policy and practice.

The members of the Family Advisory Committee continue to appreciate the support we receive from CanFASD Research Network staff and Research Leads. We enjoy the openness and collaborative spirit as we work together to improve outcomes. We encourage everyone who reads this report to join us in helping to achieve this shared goal.

Sincerely,

The Family Advisory Committee



We enjoy the openness and collaborative spirit as we work together to improve outcomes.

Family Advisory Committee
CanFASD Research Network

(Left) FAC Co-Chair, Alicia Munn, watches her son speak at the Together for FASD Conference. Photo by Ben Champoux Photography.



Update from the ADULT FASD EXPERT COLLABORATION TEAM

The Adults with FASD Expert Collaboration Team (AFECT) has completed its second year with incredible success and has a much better idea of the direction of future research projects they'd like to be involved in. This 6-member strong team has taken on some group projects with Dr. Mansfield Mela to investigate the benefits and harms of cannabis use. This study involved survey development and focus groups that AFECT participated in and will wrap up in 2023.

The committee meets once a month to hear about current projects and new opportunities and offer input into their own committee goals. Throughout this process, the group also learns about research and how research is conducted, and helps to develop knowledge tools. One of the most recent tools inspired by AFECT was a plain language dictionary to help understand the technical language used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Individually, they have provided their voice of lived experience to a number of projects, including an issue paper on Neurodiversity and FASD; research on the strengths of people with FASD; housing needs; the development of an FASD toolkit for mental health providers; and how community research has benefits and challenges for people with FASD.

AFECT members have also presented their thoughts, ideas, and experiences at conferences and meetings. They spoke alongside the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) members about the importance of understanding the needs of children with FASD at the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also presented at several meetings with the Network and external partners. In partnership with researchers and FAC, they published two papers in the Journal of FASD 1) *Nothing About Us Without Us: Essential considerations for collaborative FASD research* and 2) *What If? Incorporating the voices of those with lived experience to change the focus of FASD*.

This is a talented committee of individuals who are gaining confidence and expertise representing the lived experience voice in research projects and advocating in their own communities. Their hard work has led to innovative projects within CanFASD and has made our organization and the research stronger.

Respectfully,

Audrey McFarlane

CanFASD Executive Director and AFECT Co-Chair



Their hard work has led to innovative projects within CanFASD and has made our organization and the research stronger.

Audrey McFarlane
CanFASD Executive Director



AFECT Member, Joseph Murphy, presents at the Together for FASD Conference in Moncton, New Brunswick

from 2022-2023
CanFASD completed

30
published
articles

37
research
projects

13
technical
reports

9
book
chapters

90
presentations
& interviews

Dr. Sterling Clarren FASD Research Award

The Dr. Sterling Clarren FASD Research Award is named in honour of Dr. Sterling Clarren to recognize his pioneering contribution and leadership in the field of FASD. The award is presented annually to an individual in recognition of a completed study that has made a substantial contribution to understanding the complexities of FASD. The 2023 recipient is Danielle Johnston.

An occupational therapist working directly with individuals with FASD, Danielle's research explored assessment and diagnostic capacity for motor visual integration. Danielle's research showed that the choice of tests clinicians use during the assessment process can impact diagnosis and subsequent supports. She will present her work at the inaugural Canada FASD Conference in November 2023.

Danielle joins a roster of ten other award recipients since 2015 whose research is moving the field of FASD forward.

FASD Special Issue Journal

In September of 2022, we published a special issue in the Journal of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder focusing on research from the Network. This special collection has ten papers on FASD that explore various topics, including:

- 1 the importance of language when discussing FASD,
- 2 essential considerations for collaborative FASD research,
- 3 recent patterns and trends in FASD prevention,
- 4 effective screening approaches,
- 5 psychotropic medication usage among individuals with FASD with co-morbid psychiatric conditions,
- 6 a policy analysis of Canadian Child Advocate reports of infants, children, and youth prenatally exposed to alcohol and other substances,
- 7 mathematics achievement among children and adolescents with FASD,
- 8 portrayals of alcohol and substance use on mainstream television,
- 9 meaningfully incorporating the voices of individuals with lived experience in FASD research,
- 10 advancing a strengths-based, person-centred lifespan approach to interventions for individuals with FASD.

We created this special issue to reflect the evolution within the field of FASD research, including challenges, solutions, and evolving understandings and approaches. We wanted to capture research reflecting the diversity and complexity of the field. We also wanted to highlight the value of strengths-based, collaborative research in balancing the narrative of FASD, encouraging potential, building hope, and finding meaningful solutions.

CanFASD is built on a unique partnership that brings together many scientific viewpoints to address the complexities of FASD. The contributions in this special issue were collaborations between CanFASD staff, Research Leads, Family Advisory Committee (FAC) members, Adult FASD Expert Collaboration Team (AFECT) members, Trainees, board members, and community partners and collaborators. By leveraging the diverse wisdom of scholars and collaborators in the Network, we can continue to advance knowledge in a strengths-based and human-centered way. The stories to be told, and the successes to be achieved, will be the product of weaving together these sources of knowledge.

OUTREACH and Communications

Creating effective and engaging communication and outreach initiatives is a priority for CanFASD. Accurate, timely, and consistent information to our stakeholders, the public, and decision-makers is essential to increasing awareness of and support for FASD across Canada. We want to make sure our audience has the evidence and information they need in a format they can best understand.

Our most popular tools for public engagement include our online webinar series, our website hosting a variety of resources, and our social media accounts where we engage and connect with our community. Throughout the year, we run annual initiatives, including the FASD Awareness Month campaign in September, our CanFASD Holiday Art Competition in November, and our 12 Days of Mocktails campaign in December. These initiatives will continue over the coming year, with additional campaigns added as the opportunity arises.

Our increased focus on outreach and communications has translated to a greater awareness of FASD in the community, with more Canadians taking our online courses, increased traffic to our website, increased following on our social media sites, and broader dissemination of our research and resources.

WEBSITE

as of March 2023, CanFASD had:

62,917
visitors

177,963
pageviews

SOCIAL MEDIA

as of March 2023, CanFASD had over:

7,830
followers

570,000
impressions

WEBINARS

as of March 2023, CanFASD had:

11
public webinars

900
attendees

FASD MONTH

Every year during the month of September, organizations and communities across Canada and around the globe celebrate FASD Awareness Month. The goal of this event is to improve awareness and understanding of FASD and celebrate the strengths and successes of individuals with FASD.

This year, we partnered with Red Shoes Rock to encourage everyone to wear red in celebration of FASD Month. We also launched the Canada Rocks Red campaign, where monuments and landmarks across Canada lit their buildings up red to help us raise awareness of FASD. In total, 31 locations in ten provinces participated, including Fredericton City Hall in New Brunswick, Niagara Falls in Ontario, the Montreal Tower in Quebec, and BC Place in British Columbia.

The 2022 theme for FASD Awareness Month was *Building Strengths and Abilities*. Historically, much of the research and discussion about FASD has focused on challenges. However, it is also important to recognize people's unique talents, abilities, and interests. When we understand what people are good at and what motivates them, we can better set them up for future success. Our themes are grounded in research in evidence with the goal of reducing the stigma around FASD.

31
locations

10
provinces



Saamis Tepee, Alberta lit up red for September 9, 2022
Photo courtesy of Korie Seibel

FASD ART CONTEST

Each year, CanFASD hosts an art contest for Canadians with FASD to celebrate and encourage the creative strengths and talents of individuals with FASD. This year's winner was Ashley Jordan, a young aspiring Indigenous artist from Alberta. Ashley is interested in both traditional and digital art.



This submission is done with watercolor paints and a combination of chalk and oil pastels. I have a love for all animals, particularly wildlife and express my interest through art and similar activities. The bear featured in this piece is known as a cinnamon black bear, and could be counted as one of my favorite pieces.

*Ashley Jordan,
CanFASD 2022 Art Contest Winner*

INDIGENOUS Relations

Our Commitment to Indigenous Partnership, Reconciliatory Research, and Action

It is important for CanFASD to be responsive to the needs of our many Network members, including our Indigenous partners and stakeholders. We are committed to aligning our research priorities and actions with those guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (TRC). Both outline the need for meaningful understanding of the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, further engagement and reconciliatory relationship building, and the integration of Indigenous values, knowledge, and worldviews into research, knowledge exchange, and policy action.

In our own Network, CanFASD has made the following commitments to partnership, reconciliatory research, and action with Indigenous peoples and in Indigenous communities:

- 1** Understanding the impact of colonization and subsequent assimilatory policies and practices on intergenerational trauma, substance use, addictions, and FASD.
- 2** Building meaningful partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities that are based on the values of reconciliation.
- 3** Developing research that is guided by community needs, values, and knowledge systems.
- 4** Advocating for Indigenous-led research through sustainable and long-term funding.



WORKFORCE Development

We offer several online learning courses to improve professional and community understanding of FASD. Our courses are categorized by level of experience, where Level 1 courses provide a basic overview, Level 2 courses provide sector-specific training, and Level 3 courses provide expert training to FASD professionals.

We are proud to say we are now offering nine different courses on various topics related to FASD. Several of our courses are available in both English and French. These courses are evidence-based and reflect current research and data in the field. In order for our information to continue to be relevant and accurate, we release major updates as needed.

OUR IMPACT

As of March 31, 2023 CanFASD had:

9
online
courses

32,525
total
learners

29,801
learners in
Canada

NEW COURSES

Substance Use and Treatment in FASD

Gives professionals working in substance use and addictions the knowledge and skills to best support people with FASD who are using substances.

FASD for Community and Social Service Professionals

An advanced training course designed to support professionals working directly with people with FASD and their families.

The Prevention Conversation

Designed to give professionals the knowledge and skills to have supportive, non-judgemental conversations about alcohol use during pregnancy.

FASD for School Staff: Practical Strategies for the School Environment

Designed to give professionals working in education environments the knowledge and skills to support students with FASD.

COURSE UPDATES

Build a better foundation.



OUR COURSES

LEVEL I

Foundations in FASD (available in French)

LEVEL II

The Prevention Conversation

Identifying Best Practices for FASD Prevention, Diagnosis, and Support (available in French)

FASD for Solicitor General Professionals (available in French)

FASD for Judicial and Legal Professionals

FASD for School Staff: Practical Strategies for the School Environment

Substance Use and Treatment in FASD (available in French)

FASD for Community and Social Service Professionals

LEVEL III

Multidisciplinary Training for Diagnosis of FASD (available in French)

Moving Towards FASD-Informed Care in Substance Use Treatment

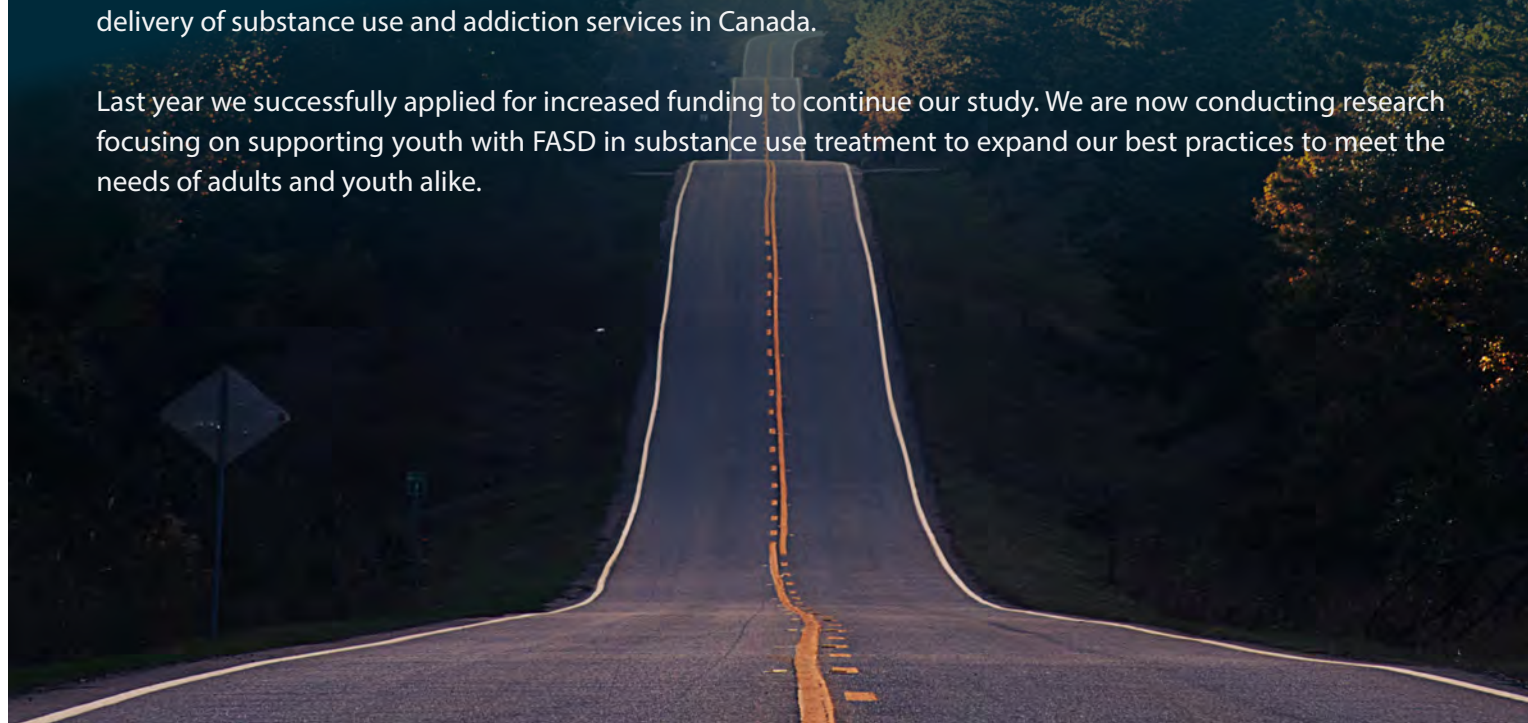
In 2020, CanFASD received funding to study substance use and addictions in people with FASD. From the research, we created a best practice guide for professionals treating adults with FASD and an accompanying online course. These are ground-breaking resources that help to fill a long-existing gap in knowledge and information to support people with FASD who are using substances.

We know that individuals with FASD experience disproportionate levels of substance use, including alcohol, cannabis, and poly-substance use with concurrent mental health issues. However, the brain-based differences people with FASD experience often make succeeding in traditional substance use treatment programs challenging.

The best practices in this guide are based on findings from a multi-phase research project that included data collection from many different stakeholders. The findings highlight the need for FASD-informed substance use treatment to best serve the FASD population. FASD-informed care benefits all clients and staff. The practices of understanding strengths and challenges and making accommodations can contribute to everyone's success. When we understand the brain-based differences that people with FASD have - while also acknowledging the individuality of each person - and work together to find creative approaches, individuals with FASD have the best chance of success in treatment.

Policymakers, front-line service providers, and other stakeholders can learn from the online training and apply the best practices when developing programs to make treatment more accessible and effective for individuals with FASD. This is particularly timely as the Canadian government has started developing national substance use health and mental health standards. FASD-informed treatment programs would significantly improve the delivery of substance use and addiction services in Canada.

Last year we successfully applied for increased funding to continue our study. We are now conducting research focusing on supporting youth with FASD in substance use treatment to expand our best practices to meet the needs of adults and youth alike.



Claudette Bradshaw FASD Innovation Award

The Claudette Bradshaw FASD Innovation Award recognizes the work of individuals and organizations who are using innovative approaches to improve the lives of individuals with FASD. The award is named in honour of the late Mme. Claudette Bradshaw to recognize her dedication and impact to the fields of FASD, early childhood education, and homelessness. It is intended to encourage innovation in the development of FASD programs and practices.

2022 Recipient

The ᐱᕿᕿᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᑎᕐᕈᑦᑲᑦ Piruqatigiit Resource Centre in Nunavut is the recipient of the 2022 FASD Innovation Award. Piruqatigiit is a grassroots organization that serves individuals with possible and confirmed FASD across Nunavut. “Piruqatigiit” means grow/growing together. Everything they do at the Centre is centered on Inuit-led and informed knowledge and worldview. All their service provision, knowledge translation, and communications are translated into English and Inuktitut.



The Piruqatigiit Resource Centre is the first organization in Nunavut to focus on FASD. Over the past four years, they have had a substantial impact in their communities. The organization is guided by immense lived and professional experience and their interventions are innovative, community-driven, and reflect the needs of their community members. We are pleased to award them this honour in recognition of all their hard work to move FASD services and supports forward in Nunavut.



Inuit Qaujijmajuqangit Knowledge Gathering - Simon & Annie Nattaq, Veronica Atagoyuk, Annie Napoyuk (in loving memory and gratitude), Shuinai Mike, Nash Sagiaktook, Amy Lewis & Noah Noah (2018)

Recognizing Claudette

Claudette Bradshaw was a beloved member of our Board of Directors until 2018. Claudette passed in March 2022. The *Together for FASD Conference* in June 2022, was the first time many of us had gathered in person since her passing. Her late husband, Doug Bradshaw, was in attendance at this event and presented the Claudette Bradshaw Award to the 2021 recipient, Alberta's Lakeland Centre for FASD.



Doug Bradshaw presents the Claudette Bradshaw FASD Innovation Award to Lisa Murphy, Executive Director of the Lakeland Centre



Doug Bradshaw and Lisa Murphy pose with the Claudette Bradshaw Innovation Award. Photos by Ben Champoux Photography.

NATIONAL FASD FRAMEWORK

In October, members of CanFASD’s staff, Family Advisory Committee, and Board of Directors witnessed the historic introduction of **Bill S-253: An Act respecting a national framework for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder** into the Senate of Canada.

As experts in FASD, we know Canada needs a coordinated, evidence-based approach to address the complexities of FASD nationally. For the last two years, CanFASD has been advocating for support to develop and implement a National FASD Strategy for Canada. This year, we have finally seen incredible success.

Bill S-253 was introduced into the Senate on October 19, 2022. If passed, the Bill will require the Minister of Health to create and implement a national framework for FASD, that:

- Educates health care and other professionals on FASD prevention, diagnosis, and support;
- Promotes research and knowledge translation;
- Sets national standards for FASD prevention, diagnosis, and support;

- Raises awareness of FASD and the risks of alcohol consumption in pregnancy; and
- Identifies any other measures necessary to improve outcomes.

On November 1, 2022, the Honorable Senator Ravalia gave his opening speech for the Bill. His speech lasted a total of 26 minutes and 30 seconds and provided a great overview of many of the complex challenges we face when trying to address FASD in Canada.

As Senator Ravalia said, “This bill is not designed to reinvent the wheel but to build on the existing work that has been conducted.” Much of the success in the field of FASD is a direct result of the contributions from community organizations and Network partners.

However, Canada as a whole can do a better job supporting people with FASD and their families. A lifelong disability, FASD has significant implications for physical health and well-being. Early diagnosis and support can reduce adverse outcomes and encourage positive engagement in society. However, diagnostic capacity and formal



CanFASD Staff and Board of Directors in Ottawa

supports across Canada are inconsistent, with some families traveling out-of-province because there aren't any formal diagnostic services in their region. The impacts extend beyond people with FASD to intersect with the health of women, caregivers, and communities.

FASD is a Canadian responsibility. Canada needs federal leadership to address FASD, which builds on the work that has already been done at the provincial, regional, and community levels. Support from government leaders like Senators Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia, Pat Duncan, Margaret Dawn Anderson, and Daniel Christmas has really helped move a national strategy for FASD forward. There is still a long way to go before Bill S-253 becomes law. However, since its introduction, we’ve spoken to many Members of Parliament, policymakers, and government leaders who are supportive of Bill S-253 and the work that CanFASD is doing.

Our success is largely due to the dedicated community of FASD advocates across Canada. Thank you for the work you have done to bring us to this point. Your voices are helping move FASD forward in Canada and bringing us one step closer to a National FASD Strategy.

“Honourable senators, a national framework to address FASD is long overdue. Given the complexity of this issue and the breadth of its effects, the existing patchwork of provincial and territorial approaches is simply not enough...”

Senator Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia from his opening speech to the Senate of Canada for Bill S-253



CanFASD representatives with Senator Ravalia (middle) at the Senate of Canada for the introduction of Bill S-253

Individual Membership

In 2021, CanFASD expanded our membership options with the addition of our individual membership program. This membership gives individuals the opportunity to become more involved with the CanFASD network. Citizens in both CanFASD member and non-member provinces and territories benefit equally from this new program. We now have over 230 dedicated members from across Canada who are invested in creating change for FASD.

A major benefit for CanFASD members is the ability to share their vision for the direction of future FASD research. Each year we send out a survey to our members to better understand community needs and areas of priority for FASD research. Of CanFASD's current research priority areas, the majority of responding members believe adult supports and mental health are essential areas for research focus. Diagnosis and intervention are also seen as a priority.



We also asked our members to share some of their personal and professional successes. Here's what they said:

If I have the privilege to work with a student with FASD, the child is happy to be in school because I can accommodate his symptoms, so he is not overwhelmed or frustrated.

CanFASD Member

The more I understand about FASD the better caregiver I am and the better I can choose supports for my family member.

CanFASD Member

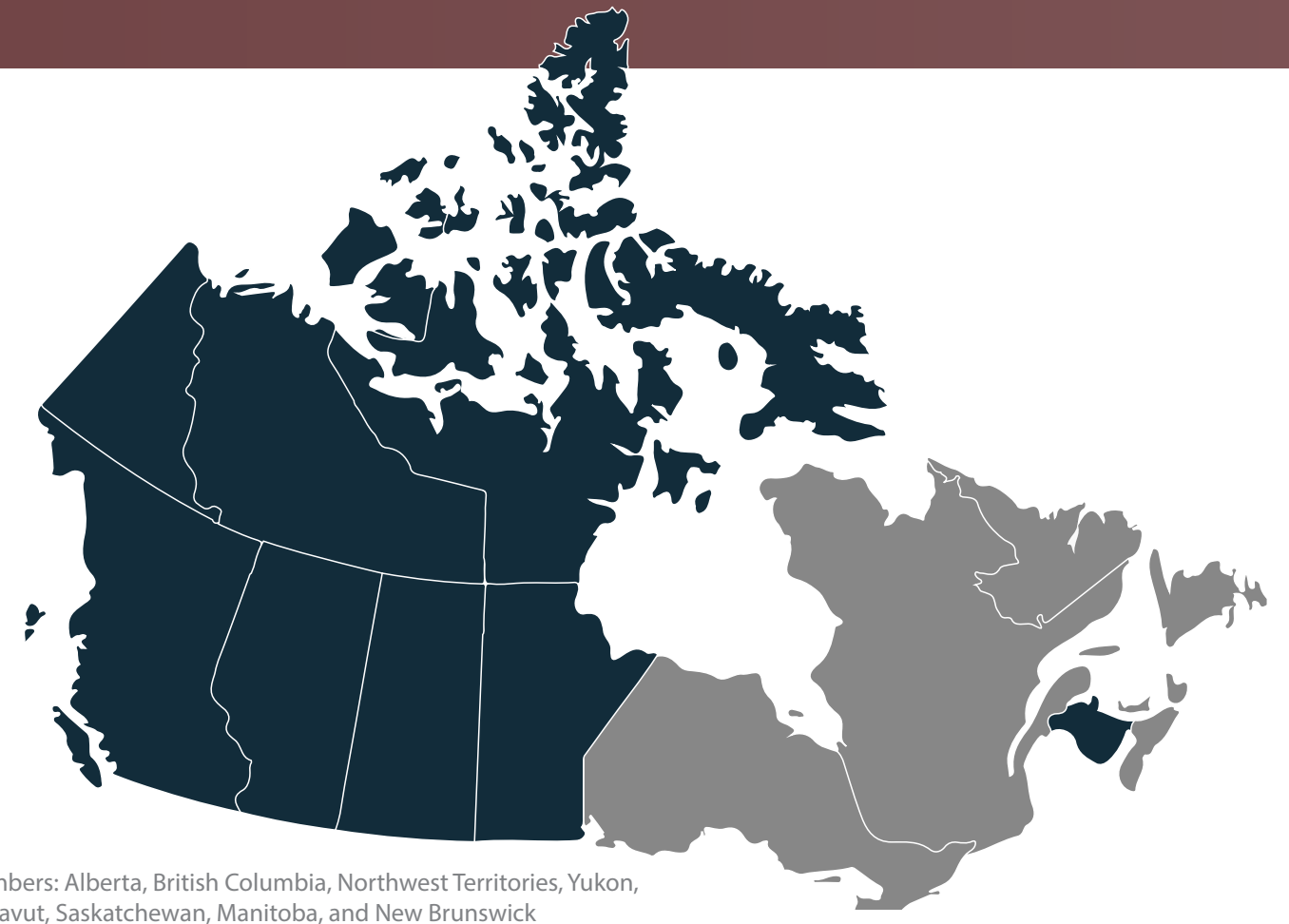
Over the last 43 years our knowledge of FASD in Canada has grown almost exponentially. I have helped with that, and it feels good but we still have a long, long way to go.

CanFASD Member

Jurisdictional Membership

CanFASD offers jurisdictional membership opportunities for provincial and territorial governments in Canada. This membership is a unique opportunity for governments in Canada to benefit from the expertise of a national network devoted to FASD. The membership connects governments with a trusted agency to turn to for answers to important policy questions.

Provinces and territories that become members of CanFASD are significantly advanced in their response to FASD. They benefit from increased research capacity, advice and assistance in evidence-based policy and program development, and collaboration with other member jurisdictions. Membership for governments also offers the potential to reduce longer-term costs associated with FASD diagnosis, prevention, and intervention.



■ Members: Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick

■ Non-Members: Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia



FINANCIAL

Snapshot

CANADA FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER RESEARCH NETWORK
Balance Sheet
March 31, 2023 with comparative figures for March 31, 2022

	2022	2023
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 251,642.63	\$ 63,461.71
Investments	260,166.69	260,660.60
Accounts receivable	67,124.96	327,520.71
HST/GST receivable	26,482.05	15,206.25
Prepaid expenses	38,922.69	27,154.33
	644,339.02	694,103.60
Capital assets		
Capital assets	10,174.61	8,484.69
Intangible assets	56,250.00	48,750.00
	710,763.63	751,338.29
Liabilities and Net Assets:		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 77,761.19	\$ 66,436.01
Deferred capital contributions	59,198.63	51,043.38
Deferred contributions	107,632.40	41,209.26
	244,592.22	158,688.65
Net assets		
	\$ 710,763.70	\$ 751,338.29

SUPPORT Our Work

FASD is a disability that often goes unrecognized and unsupported. Our knowledge of the impacts of alcohol and substance use in pregnancy has come a long way since FASD was first recognized. But there is still a long way to go.

What we know about FASD today is due to research. Research and evidence help decision-makers make choices that will have the most impact. Sound data provides a compass to guide those decisions.

CanFASD is Canada's only national network focused on FASD. We are a registered charity, funded in part by leading health and policy organizations across Canada. We bring a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of this disability, weaving together the voices of those with lived experience, researchers, advocates, governments, and service providers.

We cannot do this work alone. The support of our Network and other champions like you is vital to helping us develop and share the evidence needed to inform the policies and programs for people with FASD, their families, and pregnant and parenting women.

We have only scratched the surface in terms of the knowledge, resources, and support that we can provide. Imagine how much further we can go with your support. Your donation will help us generate more research and evidence. Your gift will ensure the knowledge developed at CanFASD reaches the stakeholders who need it to make effective policy decisions, provide the best supports, and make the healthiest choices possible.

We've made great strides to move FASD forward in Canada. Imagine how much further we could go with your support.





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This report uses stock imagery posed by models, unless otherwise specified