

## NEWS RELEASE

### **New 3-year project launches to support people with FASD using substances**

(Ottawa, 1 October, 2020) The [Canada FASD Research Network](#) (CanFASD) recently received funding from Health Canada to support the development of an online initiative that will improve substance use supports for people in the FASD community.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is a lifelong disability impacting people who were exposed to alcohol during fetal development. It is estimated that 4% of Canadians have FASD. According to the National FASD Database, 48% of people with FASD are using substances, with alcohol and cannabis being the most popular.

CanFASD received funding from [Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program](#) to run a three-year project to address substance use in the FASD community. Their goal is to develop an online training program that teaches health and social service providers how to best support people with FASD who are using substances.

Traditional substance use treatments don't usually help individuals with FASD. Their disability, and the many co-occurring mental health issues they experience, increases the likelihood of relapse after treatment. This training will give professionals and families alike the tools to effectively support people with FASD in their recovery.

This program is especially important as rates of alcohol and cannabis use are on the rise during COVID-19. CanFASD worries that the pandemic will increase the rates of addiction in this population as people turn to substances to handle their stress, anxiety, and boredom.

The announcement of this project coincides with end of [FASD Awareness Month](#). Held annually in September, FASD Month focuses on raising awareness and improving supports for people with FASD.

**About CanFASD:**

*CanFASD is Canada's first national Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) research network. CanFASD works collaboratively with researchers and partners across the nation to address complexities of FASD. Our mission is to produce and maintain national, collaborative research for all Canadians, leading to prevention strategies and improved support services for people affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.*

**To speak with a CanFASD expert regarding this project contact:**

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**For more information on CanFASD, please visit:**

<http://www.canfasd.ca/>