

Uniting Our Strengths

Improving FASD Awareness Across Canada

We all know that we need more support for FASD prevention, diagnosis, and support across the country. While we are making progress, especially with the tabling of [Bill S-253](#), there is still so much more to be done. FASD Day and FASD Month is a great opportunity 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 events in their own cities and regions. We want to make sure there is consistency *across* Canada in the messages that we're sharing about FASD and FASD prevention 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 to make sure that the work we're doing is moving FASD and FASD prevention forward. Our hope is that our movement grows and catalyses new policies, programs, and awareness. Our theme this year is [Uniting our Strengths: Finding Solutions Together](#). Read on to learn how you can help.

Uniting our Strengths: Finding Solutions Together

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a very complex issue that intersects with so many different fields. Our theme, *Uniting our Strengths: Finding Solutions Together*, goes beyond framing FASD as an individual issue, as the impacts of FASD matter to the whole community. We all have a role to play and need to work *together* to find solutions.

This FASD Month is time to come together, raise awareness, and make a difference for FASD. Let's challenge the misconceptions around FASD and unite our strengths, to help find solutions together.

Why “Unite Our Strengths”?

In research and practice, strengths-based approaches are often brought up. But what does that mean? Our strengths and interests are a foundation that we can build upon to find solutions together to help improve outcomes.



outcomes. Talents, strengths, and abilities should be recognized and celebrated at all times, especially during FASD Awareness Month.

FASD Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

We all have a role to play in FASD prevention. [Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is complex](#) and there are lots of reasons why alcohol use during pregnancy may occur. Many people still believe that FASD 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.

The more we can talk about the social and structural factors influencing alcohol consumption during pregnancy, the more we are able to understand and act together on FASD related issues.

Finding Solutions Together

We have, and continue to see, real progress and change for FASD and FASD prevention in Canada. Many organizations and advocates have created innovative solutions to how they create and deliver services and supports. This outside-the-box thinking is one of our community’s biggest strengths.

During FASD Month, let’s talk about these innovations and services. Show how you are making a difference. When we [share effective solutions](#), it shows problems are solvable. Highlighting the innovative and strengths-based solutions is one way we can support and raise awareness around FASD and FASD prevention.

Rock Red for FASD

Like last year, we are asking key landmarks and [monuments across Canada to light up red](#) on September 9th in honour of FASD Awareness Day. These are the monuments that CanFASD is initially contacting:

- **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 cities 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 how you are uniting your strengths in the community on social media this #FASDMonth2023!

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

- **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.
- **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.
- **Paint rocks red**
 - In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, 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.

Are you hosting an event in your community? We 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 large voice for FASD to further push our governments and leaders to work towards increased support and services.

But we need your support. 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.



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