

5 Things to Know About: Level 3 FASD Prevention

Specialized Holistic Support

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Holistic Support is Important

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Trauma Informed Approaches Support Safety, Choices, Collaboration, and Connection

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Culturally Grounded Approaches Support Hope, Belonging, Meaning, and Purpose

4

Partnership and Collaboration can increase Integrated Care

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It is Important to Widen the Circle of Support

WHAT IS LEVEL 3 FASD PREVENTION?



Holistic Support

Level 3 FASD prevention offers holistic support for those who are pregnant and face other health and social challenges.



Trauma & Cultural Informed

Level 3 FASD prevention offers respectful, relational, trauma-informed and culturally-grounded supports.



Integrated Services

Level 3 FASD prevention is offered through integrated and partnered services that help with a range of issues facing those who have alcohol and other concerns.



Effective Level 3 Approaches to Prevent FASD

- Community-based pregnancy outreach programs
- Addressing intersecting needs of women and gender-diverse individuals through integrated, co-located, or collaborative programs
- Harm-reduction oriented
- Trauma informed and culturally grounded wraparound services that offer relationship-based and FASD-informed support



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5 Things to Know About: Level 3 FASD Prevention

1. Holistic Support is Important

Pregnant women and gender diverse people who are at high risk of having alcohol-exposed pregnancies often face complex, interconnected challenges, including mental health concerns, experiences of trauma and violence, unstable housing, poverty, and limited social support. A holistic approach recognizes the importance of addressing all these concerns, not only alcohol and other substance use. Such an approach can be facilitated through efforts that encourage access to prenatal care, substance use counselling, mental health support, housing assistance, childcare, nutritional support, and cultural or peer support. Holistic programming can help women+ navigate multiple challenges simultaneously. Holistic programming recognizes that pregnant people may want or need to address these determinants of health before they are ready to reduce their alcohol use. Such support fosters trust, promotes engagement, and empowers individuals to make informed choices to improve their health outcomes.

2. Trauma Informed Approaches Support Safety, Choice, Collaboration, and Connection

Trauma-informed approaches recognize that many individuals at risk of alcohol-exposed pregnancies have experienced trauma, violence, racism and discrimination, neglect, and/or adverse childhood experiences. These experiences can lead to increased use of substances and negatively impact trust, decision-making, and ability to engage with services. Trauma-informed approaches support safety, choice, and self determination. They encourage shared decision-making between clients and providers, including on where and how care is provided. In prenatal care, trauma-informed approaches may result in creating safer spaces, increase empathy and compassion among providers, encourage relationship building, and recognize and appreciate the strengths and skills of those seeking care. Through supporting aspects of safety, choice, collaboration, and connection, such services help empower women+ individuals to participate actively in their care, build skills and resilience, and access the supports they need for a healthy pregnancy.

3. Culturally Grounded Approaches Support Hope, Belonging, Meaning, and Purpose

Colonization disrupted families and communities, resulting in a loss of language, culture, and teachings. Colonization also restricted and criminalized traditional childbirth and parenting practices. Promoting wellness and culturally grounded approaches are important in supporting healing from colonization and intergenerational trauma. Culturally grounded approaches support hope, belonging, meaning, and purpose by recognizing and honouring the cultural identities, values, and traditions of pregnant women. Meaningfully offering culturally grounded practices, including through Elder support, land-based activities, traditional teachings, and cultural activities (e.g., beading, weaving, harvesting medicine, etc.) can increase connection to culture and healing. This can help foster a sense of belonging and strengthens connections to community. These approaches also provide hope for positive change, meaning in personal and family experiences, and a sense of purpose.

By grounding interventions in culture, services can build trust, reduce stigma, and create a more supportive environment that empowers pregnant women, their families, and communities to find ways to connect to their culture, wellness, and overall healing.

4. Partnership and Collaboration can Increase Integrated Care

Level 3 FASD Prevention encourages a focus on interconnected health issues facing people who are at risk of an alcohol-exposed pregnancy. Offering integrated or partnered services can help increase provision of a range of different services that support both maternal and fetal health. In Canada, integrated services are offered several ways. For example, some programs use a co-located model that allows women and their children to access a range of services – including prenatal and child health, counselling, substance use services, income and housing support, etc. – under one roof. This reduces the burden of travelling between providers. Other programs have built partnerships between locations, which allows women and their families to receive care for a range of issues, but within a referral network of providers that they trust. Models built on principles of partnership and collaborate help cultivate respectful relationships and increase the ways in which women and families can seek care.



5. It is Important to Widen the Circle of Support

Peers, partners and others in women's social networks can play a key role in promoting healthy pregnancies and supporting women before, during, and after pregnancy. Engaging partners through education, counselling, and support programming, encourages shared responsibility, supports risk reduction by both partners, contributes to a positive shared pregnancy experience, and paves the way for engaged parenthood. Peers can help pregnant women and new mothers know they are not going through these experiences alone, share valuable information, empower women to voice their needs and wishes, support increases in self esteem and self efficacy, and act as advocates. Elders, doulas, mothers, friends and many others can all assist with information, practical, emotional and spiritual support and act as champions.

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