

# SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH FASD AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES: PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

The following are practices related to supporting people with FASD regarding substance use challenges. However, it is important to consider each client’s unique strengths, needs, and capabilities when developing treatment plans and goals.

<b>Develop Understanding of FASD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand FASD as a brain and body disability that is lifelong</li> <li>• Reframe behaviour from an FASD-informed lens</li> <li>• Understand differences in memory, learning, language, adaptive functioning, attention, sensory processing and executive functioning and how this can impact treatment</li> </ul>
<b>Adapt Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use simple, clear and concrete language</li> <li>• Use repetition, slow down when speaking, break down instructions into small chunks, use journals/notes, and include consistent reminders</li> <li>• Listen and respect how people identify, follow the lead of the client, and consider the impacts of stigma</li> </ul>
<b>Be Flexible and Creative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A one size fits all approach will not work for everyone</li> <li>• Be flexible and creative in the approaches you use</li> <li>• For example, consider changing activities or techniques that involve writing, or allow for movement during sessions</li> </ul>
<b>Consider the Physical Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider changing the physical environment based on sensory differences of the people you are supporting</li> <li>• Prioritize safety and comfort</li> <li>• Accommodations could include: keeping environment uncluttered and calm, include visual cues related to treatment, use less intense lighting</li> </ul>
<b>Use a Harm-Reduction Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on harm-reduction over abstinence</li> <li>• Work from a non-punitive approach</li> <li>• Examples of harm-reduction may include: education around the dangers of using substances alone and using safe supplies</li> </ul>