

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **New resource launched to support vulnerable populations in treatment for substance use**

(March 16, 2023) The Canada FASD Research Network just launched a new online training course to help substance use professionals better treat individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) who are using substances.

#### ***Understanding Substance Use and FASD***

FASD is a lifelong disorder impacting the brain and body of someone who was exposed to alcohol before birth. People with FASD have brain-based differences, which puts them at high risk for substance misuse and can make success in traditional substance use treatment programs difficult.

The rates of substance use in this population is concerningly high. One study suggests that [46% of adolescents and adults with FASD misuse substances](#). Professionals working in substance use treatment centres have likely worked with someone with FASD without realizing it. However, many professionals aren't aware of FASD and how it can impact an individuals' success in substance use treatment.

#### ***Workforce Training Resource***

This online training course is an evidence-based, inexpensive, and easily accessible solution to address a gap in knowledge across Canada. The goal of this resource is to help substance use professionals implement best practices to improve treatment for those with this disability, while understanding that traditional approaches won't work for most people with FASD.

The course is available on the Canada FASD Research Network's website: <https://estore.canfasd.ca/substance-use-and-treatment-in-fasd>. It accompanies a free best guide for substance use professionals: <https://canfasd.ca/wp-content/uploads/publications/Moving-Towards-FASD-Informed-Care-in-Substance-Use-Treatment.pdf>.

*This initiative has been made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.*

**Quotes:**

*“Canada’s workforce is largely unequipped to effectively support people with FASD, across a number of sectors. This resource is a big step forward to ensure addictions professionals have the knowledge and tools they need to reduce substance use challenges in this population.”*

**Kathy Unsworth, Canada FASD Research Network**

*“The opioid crisis is a growing concern throughout all of Canada. This resource can help substance use professionals better protect this vulnerable population and improve outcomes in addictions treatment programs.”*

**Aamena Kapasi, Project Lead, Canada FASD Research Network**

**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.*

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