



NEAFAN NEWSLETTER APRIL 2022

Closing The Loop

The Prevention Conversation is an innovative approach that focuses on the unique role healthcare professionals and social service providers can play in engaging women of childbearing age in supportive and non-judgemental conversations about alcohol use and pregnancy. Many women will be baffled or misled by the conflicting messages they've heard about drinking during pregnancy. Whether the conversation is a two minute dialogue in a doctor's office or a deep discussion with a private therapist, The Prevention Conversation needs to keep the focus on the FASD prevention message.

It is important to close the loop on the prevention conversation with the message that alcohol consumption while pregnant can cause body and brain damage. For that reason, it's safest not to drink alcohol during pregnancy.

Free training is available through the FASD Service Networks for anyone interacting with women of childbearing age. The Prevention Conversation continues to increase community awareness about FASD, raise the profile of the FASD Service Networks and strengthen community partnerships.





The Prevention Conversation: A Shared Responsibility

The prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is critical to the success and achievement of Alberta's FASD 10-Year Strategic Plan's goals and targets, all of which have the aim of reducing the incidence of FASD. The plan intends to ensure an overwhelming majority of Albertans have heard of FASD, that Albertans understand the implications of FASD; change the behavior of Albertans; and assist mothers in reducing the harm from alcohol use during pregnancy.

The Prevention Conversation Project Objectives:

- Increase the capacity of education, health and social service providers across the province to educate and support youth, women and their partners, and communities using evidence-based practices to screen for alcohol use in pregnancy and intervene appropriately and effectively.
- Increase awareness among youth, women of child-bearing age and their partners, and communities about the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure.
- Increase knowledge of community resources available to youth, women and their partners, and communities who may be concerned about alcohol consumption during early pregnancy.
- Create community connections between the education, health and social services and the FASD Service Networks to develop wrap around services.

For more information or to book a free presentation by a NEAFAN Prevention Facilitator, click below.

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“Supporting primary care providers to develop the necessary skills to engage in non-judgemental, empathetic conversations about alcohol use is paramount in the prevention of FASD.”



FASD Online Training

Training and education for FASD is very important to help with identifying people affected by FASD and providing them with appropriate supports throughout their life. There is no cure for FASD after the fact, which is why preventing FASD at pregnancy

The Prevention Conversation Target Population:

Primary:

Education, health and social service providers that work with youth, women of child-bearing age and their partners, and communities across Alberta.

is an essential part of the overall Alberta FASD 10-Year Strategic Plan. By Year 10 of the Plan, over 14,000 participants had attended 755 Prevention Conversation training events, including members of the public, service providers, and post-secondary students across sectors. The Alberta government offers online FASD training through the [Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network \(CanFASD\)](#).

“Raising public awareness of the negative effects of prenatal alcohol exposure.”

Prevention Conversation:

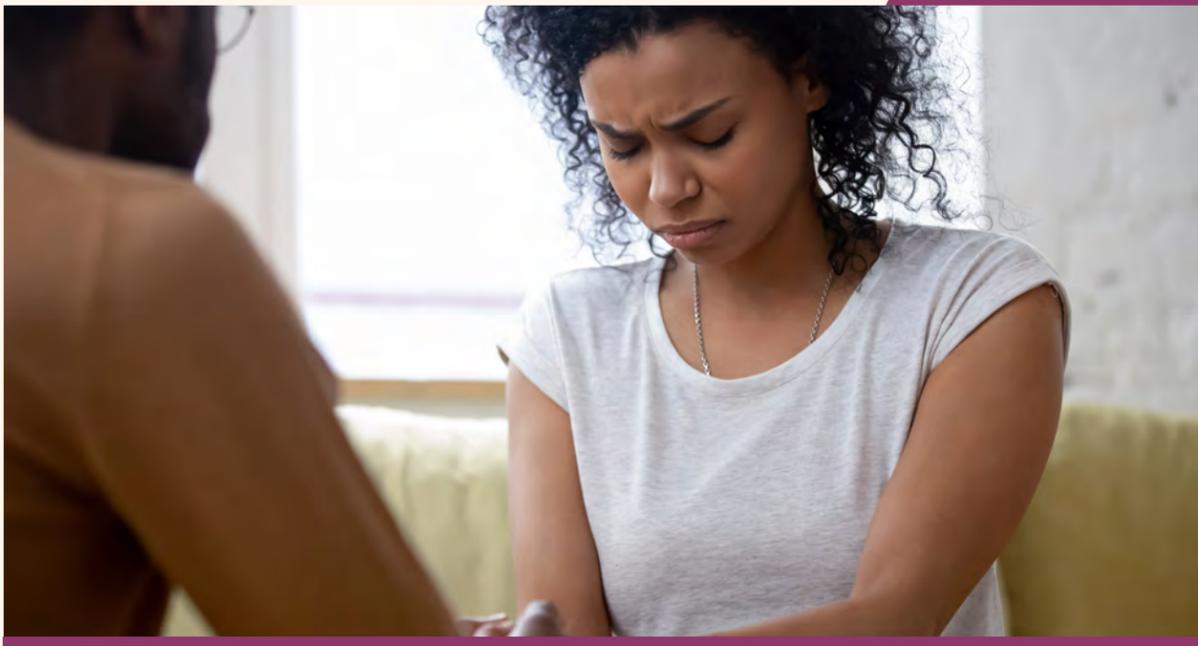
- Equips FASD prevention facilitators to raise awareness of the importance of engaging women aged 18 to 45 years old in the Prevention Conversation
- Trains health care and social service providers to effectively educate and support women and their partners by engaging them in the Prevention Conversation
- Develops community partnerships to facilitate sharing information and resources
- Online training to support the [Prevention Conversation Initiative](#)

Prevention strategies also include supporting women of childbearing age who use substances and who are not pregnant. Activities include outreach, screening, referral, and brief intervention activities. Prevention support services are specialized, culturally safe, and accessible for women who use substances. Trauma-informed and harm-reduction oriented services support women to reduce or stop alcohol and/or drug use during pregnancy, and support healthy pregnancies.



Secondary:

Youth, women and their partners of child-bearing age, and communities in Alberta.



Develop Prevention Conversation Skills

Individuals with FASD can experience a wide range of complex needs, necessitating supports from across disciplines and sectors. Although awareness of FASD in Alberta is reportedly increasing, the prevalence of FASD is not decreasing. In fact, a challenging rise in demand for FASD services suggests that awareness alone may not result in behavioural change.

Large-scale surveys conducted after FASD awareness events indicated high rates of success in terms of sharing messages about the cause of FASD, that there is no known safe amount of alcohol to consume during pregnancy, and information about the needs of people with FASD. However, permissive messages from professionals about the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy prevail, highlight the need to disseminate accurate FASD knowledge and information across sectors.

Evaluation findings revealed that professionals who received Prevention Conversation training had greater comfort and confidence in delivering messages about FASD prevention; improved their knowledge of FASD and relevant strategies, resources, and community services; and planned to incorporate this new knowledge into practice.

Supporting primary care providers, education, health and social service providers that work with youth, women of child-bearing age and their partners, and communities across Alberta to develop the necessary skills to engage in non-judgmental, empathetic conversations about alcohol use is paramount in the prevention of FASD.

For more information on the FASD Prevention Conversation, A Shared Responsibility project, click below.

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Tools to Support Conversations with Pregnant Women

In collaboration with [CanFASD](#), the FASD Prevention Conversation Project offers an online training program for front-line health and social service professionals to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage their clients/patients/communities in a supportive and non-judgemental conversation about alcohol use during pregnancy, its lasting effects on the developing child, and resources and supports available to women of childbearing age.

This course discusses FASD prevention by providing information about the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy as well as considerations to support women in a way that promotes healthy relationships with professionals and promotes safety and health in all facets of their lives.

By completing this training course, facilitators will:

- Have an understanding of the FASD Prevention Conversation: A Shared Responsibility program; its history and evolution.

- Understand the complex reasons why a woman may drink when pregnant and have the tools to support conversations with pregnant women.
- Be able to apply and tailor the key messages of “The Prevention Conversation.”
- Feel confident/comfortable to engage in brief empowering conversations to prevent alcohol-exposed pregnancy among women ages 18-45.
- Be able to conduct universal screening for alcohol consumption with pregnant women and women of childbearing age.
- Understand and be comfortable discussing harm reduction strategies if a woman chooses to continue drinking in pregnancy
- Know how to connect with local and provincial resources regarding messages of “The Prevention Conversation.”



Connect

- Website: www.neafan.ca
- Facebook: [@neafanfasd](#)
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Links & Resources

- [FASD Prevention Conversation, A Shared Responsibility project](#)
- [Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network \(CanFASD\)](#)
- [Contact a Prevention Facilitator](#)
- [FASD in Alberta](#)

