

HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE OUR 15TH EDITION NEWSLETTER

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www.metissettlementsfasd.ca



Message from the Network Coordinator

Tansi, Caregivers and Supporters,

I hope you were able to take a moment for yourself this past Mother's Day, whether you were celebrating as a mother, a caregiver, or simply reflecting on the meaningful roles we all play in the lives of those we love. The work you do, day in and day out, often goes unnoticed, but it is incredibly important and I want to acknowledge the dedication, patience, and love you bring to those you care for.

Living with or supporting someone with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) presents unique challenges, but you are not alone on this journey. Whether you're seeking to understand more about FASD for yourself or someone else, this network is here to offer the support, resources, and community that can help make the path a little easier.

Together, we are building a stronger, more informed community for individuals and families impacted by FASD. It's not about having all the answers—it's about walking this road together, offering support, sharing experiences, and lifting each other up.

Thank you for everything you do. Your strength and resilience are truly making a difference, and we're grateful to have you as part of this community.

With Respect,
Darlene Carifelle
Metis Settlements Provincial Service Network Coordinator





Northwest Peace FASD

- Northwest FASD Society** (City of Grande Prairie)
- Peavine
- East Prairie
- Gift Lake

Warm Spring greetings from Northwest Peace FASD Network!

As this beautiful season unfolds, we want to share our heartfelt appreciation with the communities we are honored to serve. Wishing you all a joyful and refreshing Spring season!

Please reach out to our local contacts for support or information about our FASD Supports: The FASD Mentors are a combination of FASD supports and PCAP Program. (Parent Child Assistance Program) Offering services to individuals and families within their respective Settlements.

FASD Mentor - Gift Lake Metis Settlement: Marge Cunningham

Email: marge@giftlakemetis.ca

FASD Mentor, Peavine Metis Settlement- Valerie Donison

Email: valerie.donison@peavinemetis.com

FASD Mentor, East Prairie Metis Settlement: Donna Grier

Email: donna@epms.ca

FASD Diagnostic Clinic

The NW Peace FASD Network has been running a mobile Diagnostic Clinic since 2013. The mobile clinic serves Grande Prairie, Peace River, High Prairie, Grande Cache, and surrounding communities.

Our diagnostic and intervention team is composed of a centralized coordinator and local professionals specializing in Speech-Language Pathology, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Mental Health, Addictions, and more. We provide comprehensive, multi-disciplinary assessments for youth aged 8 and older, as well as adults who may have been exposed to prenatal alcohol. Additionally, our team offers referrals and tailored recommendations for follow-up support and after clinic care.

To view and print our Diagnostic Clinic referral package click here: [NWFASD Referral Form](#)

For more diagnostic information contact: Michelle Perron Email: michelle@nwfasd.ca

FASD Prevention Conversation Facilitator

We invite you to join us for our upcoming training sessions in High Prairie! These sessions are open to the public, offering valuable insights and learning opportunities. We hope to see you there!





Northwest Peace FASD

- Northwest FASD Society** (City of Grande Prairie)
- Peavine
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Sponsored by:
Northwest Peace FASD
Network

FASD Foundations

This workshop provides an overview of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), it's primary disabilities, strengths and challenges of those with FASD, as well as strategies for caregivers and support workers.



Northwest Peace
FASD Network

Location:

High Prairie - Town Office
4806 53 Ave, High Prairie

Date: Tuesday, May 20

Time: 1 - 2:30 pm

**This workshop is for
adults only.**

- **No registration
required**
- **walk-ins welcome**
- **Light snacks and
refreshments provided**

780-533-5462

gloria@nwfasd.ca

<https://nwfasdnetwork.com>

**IN PERSON
SESSION**





Northwest Peace FASD

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Northwest Peace
FASD Network

Location:

High Prairie - Town Office
4806 53 Ave, High Prairie

Date: Tuesday, July 8

Time: 1 - 2:30 pm

**This workshop is for
adults only.**

- **No registration
required**
- **walk-ins welcome**
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Indigenous Wellness – Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement

In the fall and early winter of 2024, staff from the Lakeland Centre for FASD and the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement Family Resource Network collaborated to plan the annual “Empowering Our Community” program. Now in its sixth year, the program has grown significantly in both structure and impact. It was inspiring to witness how the committee has taken full ownership of the initiative, including rebranding it as “**Indigenous Wellness & Empowerment**” to better reflect its cultural and holistic focus.

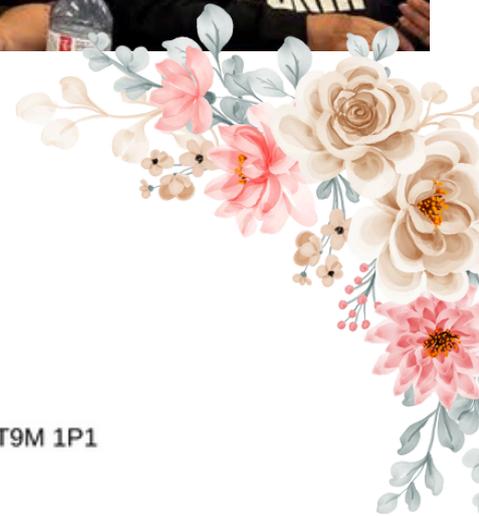


A dedicated core group of 10 participants, along with several community partners, attended regularly throughout the program. Session topics included:

- Goal Setting
- Native Roots: Métis Heritage
- Finance and Budgeting
- Traditional Medicine Teachings
- Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships
- Family Violence
- Trauma and Domestic Violence
- Navigating Community Services
- The Prevention Conversation



Each session fostered open conversation, and participants often shared personal stories and lived experiences that enriched the learning for everyone. These moments of vulnerability and connection allowed strong bonds to form among participants, creating a supportive and empowering group dynamic. Participant ages ranged approximately from 16 to 65, reflecting adverse and intergenerational learning environment.



Lisa Murphy
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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As we enter the spring season, many families find that it's a time for new routines, activities, and changes. While spring brings excitement with longer days and warmer weather, these transitions can be overwhelming for individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), who thrive on consistency and predictability.

For individuals with FASD, even small shifts in routine such as changes in weather, outdoor activities, or family schedules, can lead to increased stress, confusion, or behavioral challenges. Routines offer a sense of security and help reduce anxiety, so maintaining stability during seasonal changes is key.

How to Adapt Routines for Spring:

1. Keep Core Elements of the Routine Consistent

While spring may bring new activities, try to maintain key parts of the daily routine, like bedtime or mealtimes. Consistency in these areas offers stability.

2. Introduce Changes Gradually

Gradually ease into spring activities to avoid overwhelming your loved one. Start with small outdoor activities or shifts in the schedule, allowing time to adjust.

3. Be Mindful of Sensory Overload

The sights and sounds of spring-like busy outdoor environments or new sensory experiences can overwhelm individuals with FASD. Have quiet spaces or sensory tools available to help manage these triggers.

4. Use Visual Schedules

Update visual schedules to reflect the changes in activities, helping individuals with FASD understand and anticipate what's coming next.

While routines are essential, it's important to be flexible as you transition into the spring season. Not everything will go according to plan, and that's okay. Patience and understanding will go a long way as you navigate this time of change.

By thoughtfully adapting routines and offering support, you can help individuals with FASD feel secure and confident as they embrace the season of growth and renewal.





Spring Tips for Supporting Individuals with FASD

Plan Transitions Ahead of Time

Talk about upcoming changes (like a new routine or end-of-school-year events) early and often. Visual calendars or countdowns can help make transitions smoother.

Keep a “Go Bag” Ready

With more outings happening in spring, prepare a small bag with sensory tools (headphones, fidget toys, snacks, sunglasses) so your loved one feels supported when you're out.

Create a Daily Outdoor Routine

Short walks, garden time, or nature observation at the same time each day can help bring calm and predictability—plus the benefits of fresh air and sunlight!

Watch for Overstimulation

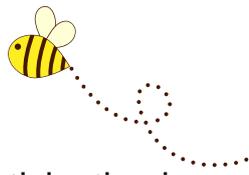
Spring means more noise, bright light, and social gatherings. Offer frequent breaks and quiet time after busy outings or events.

Use Nature as a Regulator

Water play, digging in dirt, or just sitting in the shade can offer grounding, sensory-rich experiences that are soothing for many with FASD.

Stick to Regular Sleep Patterns

Longer daylight can mess with sleep. Keep bedtime routines consistent, and consider blackout curtains or calming activities before bed.



Celebrate Small Wins

Notice the little moments of success—whether it's handling a change calmly or participating in a new activity. Affirmation builds confidence and connection.

Review Safety Rules for Spring Activities

Go over rules for outdoor play, bike safety, or staying near adults in public spaces—repeat often and role-play when possible.

Be Kind to Yourself

Caregiving is hard work. Take small breaks, reach out to your support network, and remember that it's okay to not have all the answers.





Did You Know? 5 Surprising Facts About FASD

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is one of the most misunderstood and underrecognized disabilities. Whether you're a caregiver, educator, or just wanting to learn more, these facts might surprise you and help build deeper understanding and compassion.

1. FASD is more common than you think.

It's estimated that 4–5% of people in Canada live with FASD—making it more common than autism, but far less recognized or diagnosed.

2. Most people with FASD don't "look" like they have it.

Only about 1 in 10 individuals with FASD have facial features linked to the diagnosis. The rest may look completely typical, which can lead to misunderstanding and unmet needs.

3. It affects how the brain works, not how smart someone is.

People with FASD often have average or high intelligence but may struggle with memory, impulsivity, and processing information. It's a difference in how the brain is wired—not a lack of ability.

4. FASD can't be outgrown but support makes a big difference.

FASD is lifelong, but with understanding, structure, and the right tools, individuals with FASD can thrive in school, work, and relationships.

5. Misdiagnosis is common.

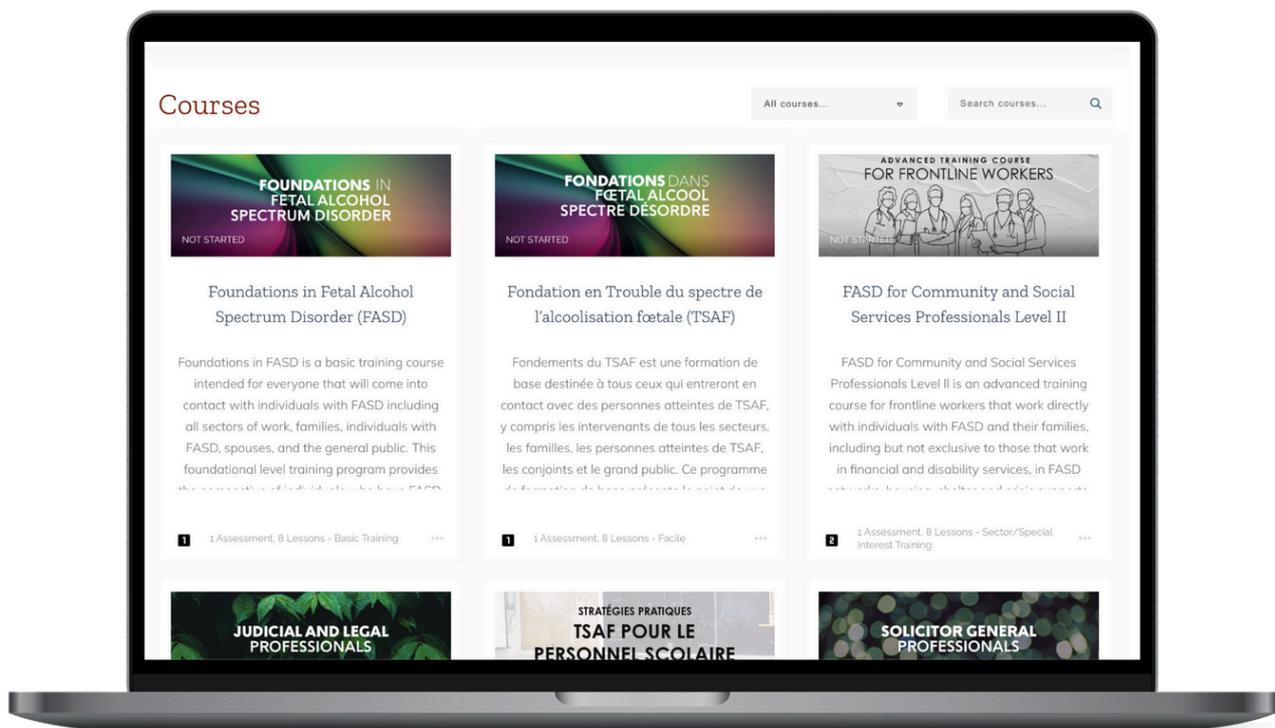
Many people with FASD are first misdiagnosed with ADHD, ODD, or other behavioral disorders. Without the right diagnosis, they may not get the support they truly need.





Want To Learn More?

Check out the great courses from the
Canada FASD Research Network!



See more online training opportunities at
www.canfasd.ca





FASD is often called an “invisible disability,” not just because you can’t always see it, but because so many individuals and families face it quietly, without the recognition or resources they need.

By learning the facts, challenging misconceptions, and showing up with compassion, you’re helping change that.

Whether you’re a parent, grandparent, teacher, frontline worker, or someone living with FASD—your efforts make a real difference. The little things you do each day to create routine, show patience, advocate for support, or simply listen with empathy are building something powerful: safety, stability, and dignity.

No one has all the answers but we don’t have to walk this path alone. There is a growing community of caregivers, service providers, and advocates (like you!) who are working to build a better future, one small step at a time.

