

FROM MOUNTAINS TO STAIRS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ALGOMA'S FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER COMMUNITY

JUNE 2023

IN THE NEWS

A new study has identified sex-specific differences in children prenatally exposed to alcohol.

Those who were born a girl experienced higher incidents of depression and anxiety. Those who were born a boy have increased risk of ADHD, Conduct Disorder and Oppositional Defiance Disorder.

Males experienced higher rates of neurodevelopmental impairments such as memory, motor skills, attention, executive functioning and adaptive functioning. While females experienced higher rates of endocrine problems such as diabetes and hypothyroidism.

As for environmental adversities, males experienced higher rates of problems in school and the criminal justice system. While females experienced higher rates of trauma and victimization.

It is estimated that 58% of people diagnosed with FASD are male.

Check out the article here:

<https://neurosciencenews.com/prenatal-alcohol-gender-mental-health-22826/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 9th is FASD Day! Red Shoes Rock has already started posting for 99 days until 9/9.

The 9th day of the 9th month is International FASD Awareness Day. This date is chosen to symbolize the 9 months of pregnancy. 99 days to 9/9 is a great way to share messages about pregnancy and alcohol.

Follow Red Shoes Rock on Facebook to get your daily posts.

<https://www.facebook.com/RedShoesRock/>



DID YOU KNOW?

FASD is not a behaviour disorder. FASD is a brain based disability. Undesirable behaviours such as aggression and impulsivity are symptoms of the disability. We should start reframing our perspective from "won't behave" to "can't behave."

At the same time, let's keep a "growth mindset." Even though people with FASD struggle with certain skills, their abilities aren't set in stone. If we provide accommodations and lots of repetition, skills can improve over time. It is more effective to change the person's environment rather than change the person.



MOCKTAIL OF THE MONTH - WATERMELON CRUSH

Ingredients:

Watermelon Juice

7 Up

Diced watermelon

Sliced strawberries

Method

Fill glass with crushed ice

Pour half glass watermelon juice

Top up with 7 Up

Add diced watermelon and strawberries to the glass.



Recipe from Kidspot.com <https://www.kidspot.com.au/kitchen/recipes/watermelon-crush-7up-mocktail-recipe/7yf3xusr>

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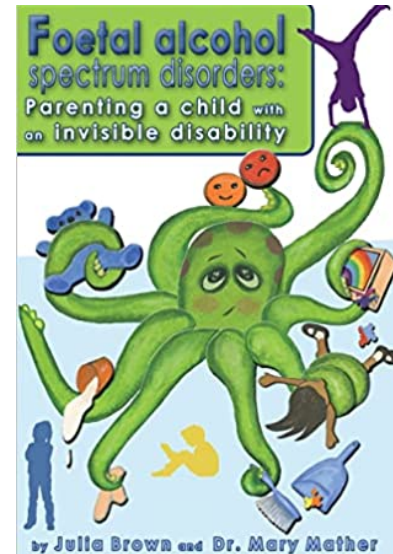
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FASD WEBINAR FASD BOOK CLUB

FASD Hub Australia presents *Managing Alcohol Use in Pregnancy*. Many clinicians don't ask their patients about alcohol during pregnancy, as they don't know how to ask, what to advise or where to refer. This webinar presents a case study of a woman who is drinking alcohol during pregnancy and listens to the perspectives of a panel of health professionals and a biological mother.

Watch the recording of the webinar here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnbEpwfMMM8>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Parenting a child with an invisible disability by Julia Brown and Dr Mary Mather is unique book written for those parenting children / young people with FASD. Julia Brown is a parent of two children with FASD and brings her practical, real life knowledge of strategies that are helpful on a daily basis. Mary Mather brings her medical expertise and explains the reasons behind the child's behaviours and responses. This book is a must for any parent or caregiver with a child affected by FASD as well as professionals in social work, mental health and counselling / therapy who are supporting families affected by FASD.



FASD STRATEGIES

Mental health concerns are a common struggle for teenagers with FASD. In adolescence, mental health concerns may become more pronounced as hormones and brain chemistry changes with puberty. Also, if the teen is not fitting in with their peers, they may be experiencing isolation and loneliness which may contribute to poor mental health.

Some strategies that can help a teen with mental health concerns include:

- FASD informed counselling or group therapy.
- If FASD informed counsellors are not available, inform the counsellor the teen's diagnosis and share their strengths and difficulties.
- Check in with the teen to give them an opportunity to talk about their mood.
- Support the teen to engage in social events.
- Support the teen to engage in hobbies or sports in the community.

CAREGIVER SELF CARE

Do you have compassion for everyone but yourself? Judge yourself too harshly for making a mistake? Would you talk to your friends the same way you talk to yourself? Humans are imperfect, fail and make mistakes - and that includes you.

Self compassion is being kind, caring and supportive towards yourself. We need self compassion to recharge our batteries. If we continually criticize ourselves, especially for the feeling that we're never doing enough, we'll become stressed and depressed. We may even lash out in moments of frustration toward the people we care for.

Self compassion is strongly related to mental health and good habits. It has been known to help people quit smoking, eat healthier, exercise and seek medical care when needed.

Self-compassion has been shown to protect caregivers from burnout and compassion fatigue, and to increase satisfaction with one's caregiving role.

Here are some tips to practice self compassion:

- Check in with yourself throughout the day. Ask yourself what you need to be kinder to yourself.
- Journal about times you were too harsh on yourself.
- Find small ways to be kind to yourself. Have a cup of tea, watch a funny video or take a short walk.
- When you're upset, imagine comforting your younger self or a pet.
- Try a guided meditation video on Youtube.
- Remember that self compassion doesn't happen overnight. Keep practicing!

We Want to Hear From You!

Let us know what other topics you would like to see in this newsletter. Submit your own success stories, strategies and tips.

Email us at fasd@kidsthive.ca