



Nothing About Us Without Us

ARE YOU A PARENT, FAMILY MEMBER, OR CAREGIVER AND WONDERING HOW THE TEEN & ADULT STREAM WORKS AT THIS CONFERENCE?

The teen and adult program, which contains both educational and social activities, runs over 3 days and is planned, organized and run by the Adult Leadership Committee of FASD Change Makers. It takes place in its own rooms; separate from the main conference but in the same hotel. It is open **ONLY** to teens and adults who have FASD or believe they do. It is NOT open to other family members. This is meant to be a safe place for teens and adults to learn about FASD from those with FASD who have become mentors and leaders and who have overcome many difficulties but who still struggle daily with different things – those who really understand and know the struggles those attending with FASD are experiencing. It is a place where they can meet others like themselves, talk about things, ask questions, learn a thing or two, and experience belonging.

This conference is very well known for its topic-specific mini-keynotes delivered by teens and adults with FASD before every plenary session in the main conference and its closing ceremonies which allow all participants with FASD who wish to do so to participate. These mini-keynotes and closing ceremonies are also planned, developed, organized and run by the Adult Leadership Committee of FASD Change Makers with the help of other adults with FASD.

Registration cost for the teen and adult program, as well as the rest of the main conference, is free for individuals with FASD. These costs are covered by FASD United. If they wish to do so, individuals with FASD are also welcome to attend any session they wish during the main conference and may leave those sessions at any time they wish to do so. The option is theirs. They are also welcome to sit where they want in the main conference, but there will be some reserved tables for them at the back of the main ballroom room during plenary sessions of the main conference.

If you wish any further information, or have questions, please feel free to contact the Adult Leadership Committee at FASDChangemakers@gmail.com or Jo Votolato, Conference Director, votolato@fasdunited.org.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- While there is no adult program on Thursday, April 11 (the pre-conference day), there will be an opportunity that day for you or your teen/adult to meet the ALC (identified with a specific name badge) at the coffee breaks; ask questions or voice any concerns.
- This is a new environment which can be quite intimidating for people with FASD.
- There are a lot of people at the conference and the teen and adult stream, so it can be overwhelming for those who have not attended before – have a back-up plan.
- Because of the “busyness” of the conference, your teen or adult may fall apart emotionally at the end of the day: you are their “safe” person.
- It can be very tiring so planning for how to deal with that is important.
- No one has to attend any session they do not wish to, so please have a plan for what your teen or adult will do in that case while you are at the main conference.
- The closing ceremonies allow the involvement of every teen or adult who wishes to do so; a rehearsal is held on Saturday evening. More information about this will be available closer to the conference.
- Friendships often develop at the conference and continue after people return home. Please be aware of these, know who and where they are and get the contact information.
- Have someone your teen or adult can talk to (someone they trust/work with) *after* the conference *ends* – processing what they have experienced will come in waves.
- Teens and adults often feel a lot of to extreme sadness after the conference when travelling home or back at home as this may have been the first place/time they have felt understood and accepted by peers; they may also exhibit behaviours or actions as a result of this and its loss.
- Your teen or adult *may* develop over-confidence as they begin to see themselves as more functional human beings.
- The emotional roller coaster can last for some time.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE THESE LIMITATIONS:

- While the ALC will be available throughout the teen and adult stream to your teen/adult to talk and sort through emotions and situations that may occur, they are not responsible for those with FASD who attend and are not “babysitters”; they are actively leading the program.
- Those with FASD must be responsible for their actions.
- Once the conference ends for the day, there is no supervision provided.