

# FASD & Public Health

## Best Practices for Talking About FASD



Language is powerful. It impacts the way people think and act and can be a tool for creating a more FASD-informed world. How the field of public health communicates about FASD impacts attitudes and behaviors toward individuals and the field of FASD in general. Here are some strategies that public health workers can utilize:

### We do not recommend describing FASD as "100% preventable."

- There are many social determinants of health that can influence prenatal alcohol exposure, requiring a nuanced discussion that avoids oversimplifying.
- "100% preventable" language can unintentionally place blame and guilt on those who experience prenatal alcohol use.
- Language that suggests people with disabilities should be prevented can be dehumanizing. It is recommended to focus on preventing *prenatal alcohol exposure*, not FASD.

### Try saying this:

✓ No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy.

✓ FASD can occur when a pregnancy is exposed to alcohol.

✓ Confirmed PAE

✓ Possible FASD

✓ Neurotypical

### instead of this:

Don't drink during pregnancy.

FASD is caused by a woman drinking during pregnancy.

Admitted to drinking

Suspected FASD

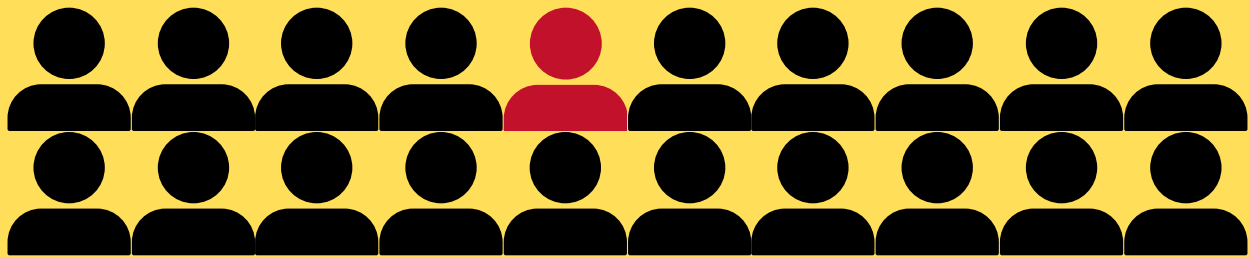
Normal

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There is a misconception that FASD is a “women’s issue” or that it only impacts certain populations. People may believe that some types of alcohol are safe during pregnancy, or that only people with alcohol use disorders can have children with FASD. **The truth is that FASD is a complex public health issue that impacts communities across geographical locations, racial and cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic status.** Anyone who experiences prenatal alcohol use may have a child with an FASD. FASD is not rare, and resources and supports are available to those impacted, including people with FASD, families, caregivers, and professionals.



**An estimated 1 in 20 Americans has an FASD.**



**Printable fact sheets about FASD**



**Support for people impacted by FASD**



**Stay current on FASD research**