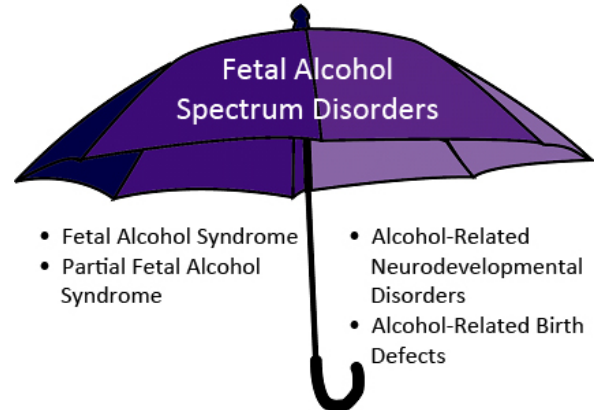


InSight Mentoring Program: An overview

InSight has been operating out of Dauphin since 2010. Services are offered within a 60 km radius of Dauphin. This includes the communities of Grandview, Gilbert Plains, Ethelbert, Winnipegosis, Ochre River, Ste. Rose, and Dauphin.

Healthy Child Manitoba identified Parkland- and Dauphin in particular- as a potential location for an expansion site of the former Stop FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) Program. The Parkland Regional Health Authority/ Public Health agreed to take the project on. Healthy Child Manitoba has since changed the name of the program to **InSight Mentoring Program**. The new name better reflects the philosophy of supporting and empowering women rather than labeling them.

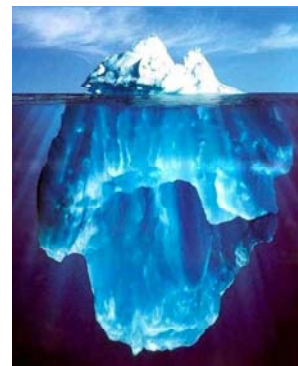


InSight is an FASD prevention model; it is evidenced based. It was developed over 20 years ago in Seattle, Washington, and expanded to Manitoba 12 years ago. The model is also being used by several Canadian provinces and by First Nation Inuit Health Branch.

What is FASD?

"FASD" or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, is not a diagnosis. Rather, it is an umbrella term that encompasses a number of different disorders including: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS); Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS); Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND); and Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD). Roughly 10 % of people on the spectrum have the visible form - FAS (facial features), most people have the invisible or hidden forms.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



- FAS
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- pFAS
Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- ARND
Alcohol Related Neuro-Developmental Disorder
- ARBD
Alcohol Related Birth Defects

Just to be clear, this does not mean they are less affected. *They still have central nervous system damage.* They will never grow out of this brain injury. People who have an FASD were exposed to alcohol while in utero. Other contributing factors include mother's health, nutrition, and genetics. The baby's development can be affected by the alcohol at any point of the pregnancy until delivery. We still do not know why some people develop an FASD and others don't.

How does the program work?

We work with women who are considered high risk to have a child born with an FASD. *These women may be involved with other agencies/support systems; however it may not be an effective working relationship.* For whatever reason, these women did not fit traditional programs. InSight strives to fit the women and their needs.

To be eligible for the program women must be 18 years old, live within 60 km of Dauphin, pregnant or up to 6 months post partum, and have consumed alcohol at some point in their pregnancy. We have 2 mentors with each mentor able to accommodate up to 15 clients. Case loads are kept low in response to the intensive nature of the work.

On average, province wide, the women enrolling in InSight are 26 years old and expecting their 3rd child. They may have their grade 9, most 86% are on social assistance, and half have an open child welfare file. Their lives are characterized by many challenging features.

Recognizing that these women have high needs, we will continue to work with women regardless of guardianship of their children, and with those who continue to use alcohol and other drugs. We recognize that setbacks are a part of the process and are to be expected.

From an FASD prevention perspective we consider two ways to prevent a child from being born with an FASD; preventing the pregnancy and by not consuming alcohol during a pregnancy. Our provincial evaluations demonstrate an increase in women using birth control regularly, and many were abstinent from alcohol for six months or more at exit from the program.

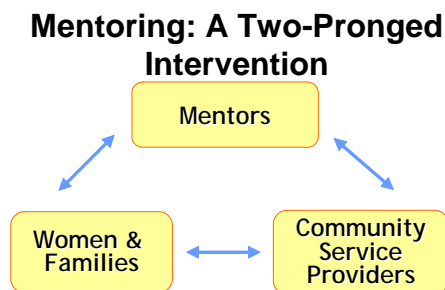
Approaches to Preventing Alcohol/Drug Exposed Births

- **Fostering a supportive working relationship**
- **Motivating women to stop drinking or using drugs before and during pregnancy**
- **Helping women who can't stop drinking or using drugs to avoid becoming pregnant**



How do we support these women?

The mentor strives to build a bond, trusting relationship with the woman. By assessing strengths, challenges and needs of the woman, the mentor is able to provide information, support, and to model life, social and parenting skills. We also work to develop a relationship with others involved in her life and will advocate for them as well when appropriate. Through regular visits, phone calls and letters regular contact is maintained. We also work to trace the women when they disappear. Files will not be closed before the 3 years are up.



The mentors also work to establish a working relationship with community service providers. As the program does not provide direct treatment or health services we link women with available and appropriate community services. The mentors are involved in case consultation with service providers such as child welfare, income assistance, probation services, alcohol/drug treatment, etc. We work to ensure the women are receiving the services intended through advocacy and follow through.

The third relationship that the mentors work on developing is that between the women and the other community service providers. They also assist women to learn to advocate for themselves. This is in preparation for the time when women graduate out of the program.

A summary of the mentor's roles includes to act as supports, advocates, brokers, and educators while they provide an intensive, one-to-one long-term service over three years that is flexible/customized in response to the woman's needs.

By assisting women to address their life circumstances the women become empowered. They are given hope for the future in addition to increasing their life skills.

What the women have to say about the InSight Program:

"My mentor was there for me no matter what, when I really really needed it."

"My mentor said things like; 'if you can't do it now, you can work on it and it will come'."

"I learned how to talk for myself with other agencies. My mentor would encourage me to call and speak for myself. She followed up and made me call her back."

"My mentor helped me to realize I am not perfect, but I am a good person. I learned how to pat myself on the back once in a while and not be ashamed of myself."

"I saved all the cards and notes that my mentor sent me."

More facts about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Alcohol causes more damage to the developing fetus than any other substance, including marijuana, heroin, and cocaine. (Institute of Medicine, 1996)

FASD is the leading cause of developmental and cognitive disabilities among Canadian children, (Health Canada, 1996; Canadian Pediatric Society, 2002) and has surpassed Down syndrome, spina bifida and cerebral palsy in estimated prevalence in the United States (Anon., 1983).

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/fasd-ntw-etcaf-atn/app-eng.php>

Half of all women of childbearing age drink alcohol. Half of all pregnancies are unplanned.

Living with FASD

21-year-old stated: "It (FAS) really does affect quality of life. It affects, school working, friendships...."

How does it affect me? Differently. I do things differently.....My brain is rewired differently (than others)."

8-year-old stated: "(It's) hard, hard to keep out of trouble, and I am not that smart. Everybody makes fun of me."

10-year-old stated: "Learning is hard. The teachers don't explain things (in a manner that allows her to understand)."

21 year old stated: "The disability happened, it's a disadvantage. It is not a disability. I don't like to use 'it as an excuse (for not participating in life)".

For more information about the InSight Mentoring Program within the Parkland Regional Health Authority please call **638-3054**. You can also call Toll-Free at **1-800-259-7541** and ask to be put in touch with the InSight Mentoring Program.