

So You Have Been  
Diagnosed with FASD  
**Now What?**

A handbook of hopeful strategies  
for youth and young adults

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# So You Have Been Diagnosed with FASD... Now What?

The goal of this handbook is to help young people, like you, learn more about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). It also offers strategies that you can use to better understand yourself, improve your relationships, manage your feelings, do better in school and live a healthy life.

Please make this handbook your own—do the quizzes, make notes and write your own questions.

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To find out more about Boyle Street Education Centre, visit [www.bsec.ab.ca/](http://www.bsec.ab.ca/)

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# Introduction

Have you ever felt alone, confused, helpless, overwhelmed or misunderstood?

Everyone has felt this way at some point in their lives. There are many reasons why a person may feel this way. Some people have a lot of challenges in their lives. Other people are just more sensitive to things that happen.

But maybe you have been diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)?

If you have been diagnosed with FASD, you need to know that it is okay to talk about it. The information in this booklet will help you better understand how your brain works and how you can deal with everyday challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Different things work for different people so choose the ideas and strategies that will be most helpful for you.

Maybe you have **NOT** been diagnosed with FASD but you feel that you learn differently than your friends? You may still find many of the strategies in this booklet helpful.

Use the information in this booklet to help you learn what it means to have FASD and learn strategies for creating the kind of healthy and happy life you want.

# Identity

## Why do I have FASD?

If you have been diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, you may have a lot of questions like:

Why did my birth mother drink during her pregnancy? Why couldn't she control her drinking?

How could you hurt someone that depends on you?

Why do I have to deal with feelings of sadness and frustration?

Do my friends and family know that I have FASD?

You may be thinking **“Why did this happen to me?”**

There are many possible reasons.

Some mothers do not know that drinking alcohol could hurt their baby.

Some mothers do not know that they are pregnant right away so they continue to drink alcohol.

Some mothers have an addiction to alcohol and have difficulty controlling their drinking.

Some mothers do not ask for help or ask questions about using alcohol because they are afraid they may be looked down on or rejected.

## One mother's story

Mary Russell was an only child who ran away from home at an early age.

Her mother was alcoholic and her father was abusive.

Mary ran away to live on the streets. She became addicted to alcohol, cocaine and heroin.

After a few months on the street, she learned that she was pregnant with twins.

Because she didn't have a lot to eat and was taking drugs, her period had stopped and she did not know that she was pregnant until she was almost five months. One twin son was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) but the other twin did not seem to be affected by the alcohol.

## IDENTITY

Mary had to visit her baby in the hospital for the first few months of life. Watching her new baby made her realize how her addictions had affected her son's life. She made the choice to get help and start recovery. Her sons now know that their mom was sick and that she did not know that she was pregnant.

Today Mary has been clean and sober for over 15 years. She is now a youth worker who helps young mothers understand the dangers of alcohol use.

She is learning everyday and is teaching others.

There are many stories of why mothers drank alcohol when pregnant.

Think about how a mother of a child with FASD might feel.

*What do you think the mother feels?*

shame  
guilt  
fear  
helplessness  
new understanding

*How does this story make you feel?*

confused  
angry  
accepting  
sad  
alone  
forgiving

Accept your own feelings.

This may take some time... hours, days, weeks, years. Give yourself permission to release and FEEL your feelings.

You might also be thinking...

What if it was my father who drank alcohol?

Research says that effects of the father drinking on the unborn baby are not known.

The biggest effects are after the birth when a father who drinks cannot give a lot of support to his family.

## What FASD is

Everything a pregnant mother eats or drinks or smokes can be passed on to the unborn baby.

The alcohol in the mother's bloodstream passes through to the unborn baby.

Some babies are affected more than others. No two babies are ever affected the same way.

## Can you relate?

Here is a TRUE STORY based on someone who has been affected by FASD.

“My name is Robert and I was born in 1976 and was adopted at the age of 3.

I wasn't diagnosed with FASD until I was in my teens. During those early years I had many struggles with family, friends, school, and trying to understand myself.

Each and every person learns differently. Throughout my school years I struggled with learning. I wasn't able to sit and read something. I had trouble finding the answer and showing it on paper.

I could not always remember the steps to a math problem.

I could not understand why I always seemed to be late for school and I often lost my books and pencils.

I seemed to repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

I did not know how to ask for help from my teachers.

When I found out I had FASD, it was a big relief. Knowing it was a medical condition explained a lot to me. With help, I began to learn different ways to cope with my difficulties.

I found that the best way to learn was to **EMBRACE** my challenges and to understand my weaknesses, rather than to fear them.

When I decided to move out on my own, I was **afraid** that I would not be able to manage. I had many hard decisions to make. But I wanted to be independent and the drive to **achieve** was stronger than the fear of failure.

Everyone has struggles. With the right tools, you can turn these struggles into strengths.

I want other young people with FASD who are feeling frustrated to know that there are ways to deal with your difficulties and embrace your abilities. And when you do this, good things will come into your life. You can lead an independent and fulfilling life. No matter what, **believe in yourself** and keep on going!”

There are other words related to FASD.  
You may hear other words such as:

Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE)

Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD)

Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental  
Disorder (ARND)

Possible Prenatal Alcohol  
Related Effects (PPAE)

These are all **medical terms**. These terms  
describe medical conditions, **NOT** people.

There are many kinds of labels and  
stereotypes in today's world. **Everyone**  
faces them at some point in their lives.

You might hear stereotypes such as:

*"Blondes have more fun."*

*"They are punks because they listen  
to punk music."*

*"Men don't cry."*

People tend to label things or people  
that they do not understand.

## Will my FASD go away?

No, FASD cannot be cured and does not go away. It is with you for life. But how you deal with it, and the support you get, will make a big difference.

You are not so different from everybody else. Accept your fears and challenges. Everyone has fears and difficulties in their lives.

A medical diagnosis of FASD, like any medical information, is private. It is your choice who you share this information with.

Know that it is **OKAY** to talk about FASD with people you trust. Talking about your FASD lets others know what your needs are.

# Relationships

We all have many relationships...

Best friend

Brother

Mother

Wife

Father

Sister

Boyfriend

Teacher

Co-worker

Girlfriend

Husband

Stranger

You shake hands, talk, hug, kiss, argue and smile with many people everyday.

## How other people see **your actions**

In many ways you are just like  
other people around you.

You look like other teenagers.

You may be attractive  
polite  
talkative.

Maybe some people say that you have a problem. But you feel that you do not.

Sometimes when you are with people, does it seem like they don't understand what you are saying or why you are acting the way you do?

Do you sometimes get angry and confused with your teachers and family?

Does it seem like people are blaming you for things over and over again?

At school, do you sometimes have difficulties with:

- homework
- sitting still
- being on time
- lying
- making the same mistake over and over?

Everybody is different and every brain is different.

People in your life see your actions and understand them in different ways.

## Do you have difficulty getting homework done?

To your teachers, this might look like:

- You are lazy or not responsible.

What you might feel:

- I thought I could do this in class but it seems harder to do at home.
- I cannot remember what I am supposed to do.
- I am embarrassed and afraid to ask for help.
- I don't know what questions to ask.

## Do you have difficulty sitting still and staying in one place?

To your teachers, this might look like:

- You are trying to bother other students.
- You are doing it on purpose to get attention.

What you might feel:

- I have a hard time focusing on one thing for too long.
- There is too much information. I need a break.
- I need to find ways to release my energy.
- I feel better when I am moving.

## Are you always late?

Some people might think:

- You are lazy.
- You don't care about being on time.

What you might feel:

- I need help remembering dates and organizing my schedule.
- I have trouble planning how long something will take or deciding when the best time to do something is.
- Time doesn't mean much to me.

## Do people think you are lying?

Some people might think:

- You are not honest.
- You are doing it on purpose.

What you might feel:

- I can't remember what happened in what order.
- I can't remember things that happened.
- Sometimes I am confused with what I heard, what I did and what I saw on television or a video.
- I am just trying to say what I think other people want me to say.

## Do you make the same mistake over and over?

Some people might think:

- You are pretending you don't understand.
- You are not trying hard enough.
- You are trying to make them angry.

What you might feel:

- I don't see why this is important.
- I didn't understand that this would happen if I did that.
- I don't always learn from my past mistakes because they don't seem like the same thing to me.

Those are some examples of how people who do not understand FASD might see your behaviour.

It is okay to tell your teachers or friends about why you act the way that you do. This will help you tell them what you need.

“I have trouble understanding when you speak too fast. Could you please slow down so I could understand you better?”

“Could you explain that another way?”

“I cannot focus anymore. I need to take a break.”

## Resolving conflicts

There are many people and different situations you deal with everyday...

Family members

Teachers

New friends

Strangers

## What is your conflict style?

Read the following story to see how you deal with conflict now and how you could deal with it better.

### Imagine that...

- You and your best friend moved into an apartment together.
- Before you moved in, you tried to talk with her about how much money you will both need and what you will need to buy for the new apartment.
- She did not meet with you until it was time to move in.
- Now everything is a mess. You need to pay your rent but your friend does not have enough money and asks you to pay the whole rent yourself this month.

## How would you react?

- A** You glare at your friend and yell that it is all her fault.
- B** You are angry inside and agree to pay this month but don't say anything about how you feel.
- C** You leave the room without talking to your friend. You need to get away for a few hours.
- D** You tell your friend that you are angry and that if she wants to live with you then she must pay half the bills.
- E** You tell your friend that you are worried what the landlord will think. You explain that next time she should talk to you about money problems ahead of time and you can try and help her find a solution.

If you answered **A**:

**You are Competitive.**

You are aggressive and don't listen to the other person.

This creates a WIN (for you) and a LOSE (for the other person) situation. Don't react to your emotions. Calm down and then talk to the other person.

If you answered **B**:

**You are Accommodating.**

You don't say what you feel and you feel that the other person's needs are more important than yours.

This creates a LOSE (for you) and a WIN (for the other person) situation. Try to tell the other person how you feel and discuss how you can solve this problem together.

If you answered **C**:  
You are **Avoiding**.

You say very little and don't admit that there is a problem.

In this situation both people LOSE.

If you answered **D**:  
You are **Compromising**.

You say what you feel but sometimes give in and don't stand up for yourself.

In this situation you could WIN or LOSE.

If you answered **E**:  
You are **Collaborating**.

You say what your needs and feelings are. You are respectful and try to be helpful to the situation and the other person.

In this situation both people WIN!

Next time you are in a conflict...

What **feelings** might you have?

Anger

Sadness

Confusion

Happiness

Fear

These are all natural feelings. Knowing that you have them will help you manage them better.

Take the time to stop and feel what is happening to your body when you are in a conflict.

How does your **body** feel?

Sweaty palms

Fast breathing

Upset stomach

These reactions can all be signs of anxiety, excitement or fear.

When you are in a conflict, take the time to check out how you feel both emotionally (in your head) and physically (throughout your body).

1. Breathe.
2. **Collect** your thoughts and feelings.
3. And then... act.

For more information on conflict styles, go to: [http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/tools/conflict\\_styles\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/tools/conflict_styles_assessment.pdf)

## How to handle someone who is bothering you

**Show confidence!** When you stand brave and tall you send the message that you are confident. People can sense that.

**Ignore.** Try your best to ignore anyone who is making threatening or insulting comments to you. Don't react; that is the reaction they are trying to get.

**Don't bully back.** Don't hit, push, swear or get really angry. If possible, walk away.

Stand up for yourself. Tell them that you don't appreciate what they are doing and ask them to stop.

Talk to an adult you trust.

For more information on dealing with bullies, go to:  
<http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies.html>

## Sexuality

Now that you are older, you may be more curious about sexuality. This curiosity is healthy and normal.

It's natural to want to have a girlfriend, boyfriend, fall in love, and even get married.

Relationships take a lot of work, especially when sexual feelings are involved.

No matter how you feel, or whether or not you are in a relationship right now, it's important to learn about healthy and safe sexuality.

Some people choose **NOT** to have sex because they want to:

- wait until they are older
- wait for a long-term relationship
- avoid pregnancy or infections
- honour cultural or religious beliefs.

Even when people **PLAN NOT** to have sex, it can sometimes happen because people:

- get caught up in the moment
- feel pressured by their partner
- may think sex will make them feel more loved or needed.

Alcohol or drugs can also affect decision making.

**Be smart.  
Unprotected sex  
is never safe.**

Do what you can do to prevent unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Use condoms.

Use another birth control method.

Health clinics and your doctor can give you medical information about birth control—you will not be judged. It is your body. Take care of it.

What YOU decide is personal so take your time to decide what is best for you.

No one ever regretted waiting. But many people have regrets for not thinking before making an important decision.

# Feelings

Sometimes,  
does:

touch

light

sounds

pain

cold

hot

make you uncomfortable  
or upset?

Or do you sometimes NOT  
feel anything at all?

## Feeling too much?

You may be sensitive to many things such as touch, taste, smell, sight and sounds.

You will probably be more sensitive to some things than others.

You may find that:

- bright light bothers you
- someone touching you causes a lot of pain
- eating crunchy foods causes you pain
- you cannot be in large crowds for a long period of time
- some smells make you feel sick.

## Touch

If you are sensitive to touch:

- make sure clothes are not too tight or too loose
- try washing your clothes a few times before wearing them
- remove the tags from clothes so they do not scratch you
- wear comfortable shoes
- avoid tight hair bands
- use soft bed sheets for sleeping
- explain to friends and family that you need your personal space

## Light

If you are sensitive to light or certain colours:

- wear sunglasses and a hat outside
- use soft lighting for reading

### Sounds

If you are sensitive to sounds:

- keep the sound turned down low when watching TV or listening to music
- avoid big crowds

### Taste

You may be sensitive to spicy, hot or cold food.

- Experiment and keep in mind what food texture bothers you.
- If a smooth texture bothers you, avoid foods like mashed potatoes.
- If crunchy food bothers you, try drinking fluids and avoid crunchy foods such as pretzels or carrots.
- Brush your teeth before you eat to get rid of other tastes such as sweet or bitter.

Do you find that you can't sit still for very long?

- Ask a teacher if you can chew gum in the classroom.
- Try sitting on a big rubber exercise ball.
- Doodle on the sides of your notes.
- Wear bracelets or keep small things in your pocket such as a keychain so that you can fiddle with it.

Do you hold a pencil very tightly when writing?

- Try using pencil grips.

If someone hits you, do you feel like someone has patted you?

- If so, try using a heavy blanket or comforter when sitting or sleeping. This may make you feel more comfortable.

## Stressed?

There are many reasons why you may be stressed or worried...

Problems with friends

Death of a loved one

Moving

Money problems

Failure at school

Changing schools

Illness

There are many signs that you are stressed...

Feelings of anger or anxiety

Memory problems

Trouble sleeping

Headaches

Increased substance use

Arguing with others

Tense or sore muscles

Feelings of depression

Always wanting to be alone

These signs are your body's way of telling you that something is wrong. You need to pay attention to what your body is telling you.

## Ways to relax

### Avoid caffeine and nicotine

Coffee and tobacco are stimulants and actually increase stress.

### Do not drink alcohol

Although it may seem that drinking alcohol will help you forget your problems, it is a depressant and will make all problems seem more depressing.

### Get physical

Go running, play basketball or go dancing. Any exercise will release endorphins which will create a natural high and make you more calm.

### Take a vacation in your mind

Close your eyes. Imagine yourself in your favourite place. This may be a warm beach, the mountains or even your own bedroom.

Imagine you are there.

See what is around you.

Feel the wind or warm sun.

Hear the peaceful sounds.

Relax and enjoy.

### Cry

When you are upset, let yourself go. Shedding tears can be a great stress releaser.

### Laugh

Talk to someone. Tell a joke.  
Watch a funny movie. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself.

## **Breathing**

When you feel stressed, you take quicker, shorter breaths.

Breathing slower and deeper will make you calmer.

1. Close your eyes.
2. Sit up tall.
3. Think about your breathing.
4. Relax your face.
5. Breathe in and relax your belly.
6. Hold for 1 minute.
7. Let go of your breath slowly.
8. Repeat 5 times.

### **Be creative**

Use paints, crayons or even a pencil to create a picture and express yourself. There are NO rules. Draw anything!

### **Write**

Write in a journal or on a single piece of paper. Create your own music lyrics, poems or stories.

### **Find a spiritual path**

This can mean talking to a higher power, praying or going to a religious ceremony that has meaning for you.

### Confront your fears

Do not ignore what you are afraid of. For example: Think of a bad situation—“you think that your boyfriend or girlfriend wants to break up with you.” Make a list of at least 10 things that could happen.

For example:

1. I will be alone for a while
2. I will cry for a little while.

Then rate from #1 to #10, 1 being the worst thing and 10 being the least.

Is the worst thing really that bad?

## Create your own special place

For those times when you are feeling that too much information is entering your brain...

Create a place of your own where you can escape. It could be any room with:

- dim lighting
- large pillows
- a comfortable bed or chair
- music of your choice
- windows that are covered.

In this place you can:

- wrap yourself in a blanket
- calm down. Talk to yourself about how you are feeling in the moment.



# In the classroom

School can be tough for teens with FASD. You will be more successful in school if you know what kind of learner you are and what kind of support you need to ask for.

## What kind of learner are you?

1. Do you learn best and remember information when the teacher says it out loud?  Yes  No
2. Do you enjoy classroom discussions?  Yes  No
3. Do you talk out loud when reading?  Yes  No
4. Do you like listening to music?  Yes  No

If you answered YES to most questions, you are an auditory learner. You learn by hearing.

If you learn by **hearing**  
the information, try...

- reading out loud
- making up poems and rhymes to help you remember facts and dates
- repeating over and over what you want to remember
- imitating voices of characters or people you have known and reading and speaking in their voices
- when using a computer, talking to the computer. Hear yourself asking and answering questions.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Do you learn best when teachers write on the board?  Yes  No
2. Do drawings and photographs help you understand new ideas?  Yes  No
3. Do handouts help you study?  Yes  No
4. Do you like to make notes from textbooks?  Yes  No
5. When the teacher is talking about something, do you make pictures in your mind?  Yes  No
6. When answering questions on tests, do you think about the page in the textbook that had this information?  Yes  No

If you answered YES to most questions, you are a visual learner. You learn by seeing.

If you learn by **seeing**  
the information, try...

- using videos to help you do research
- drawing graphs and charts when taking notes
- drawing pictures of important topics and ideas
- teaching yourself in the mirror
- making picture flash cards of key words, terms, dates
- making a mind map or web of all your notes
- using different colours for highlighting and making notes – one colour for facts, another colour for dates and a third colour for key words.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

1. When you do math, do **objects** like dice or cubes help you learn new concepts?  Yes  No
2. In science, is it easier to learn when you have a lab and do an **experiment**?  Yes  No
3. Can you put something together **WITHOUT** looking at the instructions?  Yes  No
4. Do you remember what you **DID** but maybe not what someone said?  Yes  No
5. Do you **use your hands** when you talk?  Yes  No
6. Are you **athletic** and love to move?  Yes  No

If you answered YES to most questions, you are a **tactile learner**. You learn by **doing**.

### If you learn by **doing**, try...

- recopying your notes in bigger writing and on bigger paper
- moving when you are planning what to write – try walking and thinking
- taking information from history, science or literature and inventing a plot – turn the information into an action-packed story
- taking notes while you are reading – use post-it notes in your books and use coloured markers to jot down key words and questions
- building or drawing what you are learning about – a model of a heart or other body organ, or a drawing of a place you are studying.

Do your best on tests

## Do you struggle with test anxiety?

During tests, do you have thoughts like:

- “I knew all the answers yesterday, how can I just blank out now?”
- “I just want to finish this test and get out of here.”
- “There are so many questions. I will never finish.”
- “No one else seems to be having a hard time. Am I the only one?”
- “I will never pass this.”

### What can I do?

First, change the way you think...  
how you think is very powerful.

Use positive self-talk. Say  
things to yourself like:

- "I studied my best  
and will do my best."
- "I will finish in time  
and will not give up."
- "One test will not change my life."
- "Education is about learning,  
and not just about marks."

### During the test

- Look over the entire test to see how long it is and what kinds of questions it has.
- Estimate how long you should spend on each question.
- Do the easiest questions first.
- If you blank out on a question, put a star (\*) beside it, skip it and go to the next one.
- Focus on yourself. Ignore everything else in the room.
- If you don't understand a question, quietly ask the teacher.

For more information on studying for tests, go to: [http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/school\\_jobs/school/test\\_terror.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/test_terror.html)

## Study skills

### Be a smart learner

**Make a chart** to carry around or hang in your room. This can help you remember what you need to do for each subject and help you plan your week better.

	English	Math	Science	Social
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

**Sing or tap to a beat** while saying the information. Think of a rock or hip hop song and make the information you are learning into a lyric.

**Watch a DVD.** If you have to read a book, try finding the DVD or the book on tape.

### **Don't like reading books?**

Practise your reading with anything that interests you like comics, graphic novels, magazines or newspapers.

**Highlight.** Use different colour highlights for different kinds of information.

For information on preparing to study, go to: <http://www.how-to-study.com/Preparing%20to%20Study.htm>

## Finding my learning difficulties

If you have problems with learning over and over again and are not sure what is wrong... think about these questions.

1. Do I come to class on time?  Yes  No
2. Do I come to class with all my binders, books, paper, pens and pencils?  Yes  No
3. Do I pay attention in class?  Yes  No
4. Do I take good notes in class?  Yes  No
5. Are all my binders and notebooks organized and easy to read?  Yes  No

## IN THE CLASSROOM

6. Do I give answers and ideas in class discussion?  Yes  No
7. Do I write down when I have exams and when assignments are due?  Yes  No
8. Do I get my homework done?  Yes  No
9. Can I understand what I am reading?  Yes  No
10. Do I know who to ask for help?  Yes  No

Use your answers to these questions to decide if there is something at school that you need to work on.

# Life skills

School takes up a lot of your time and energy and then you also have to...

Plan your **time**

Manage your **money**

Choose **healthy foods**

Get a **good night's sleep**

Life can get stressful. This life skills section has some useful tips for everyday.

## Time

Sometimes it is hard to have a good understanding of time since it is such an abstract idea. (*Abstract* means it is something you cannot feel or touch.)

To tell the time  
you can use  
a digital clock                      or a face clock.



A good way to remember what you need to do at different points throughout the day is to use a watch with an alarm.

For example:

If you have to meet someone at 5:00, set the alarm for 5:00 so you remember.

People also talk about time  
different ways...

“Quarter after four”

“Four fifteen”

“Forty-five minutes before five”

All mean **4:15**

And people also say A.M. and P.M.

**A.M.** is in the morning  
(from midnight to noon)

**P.M.** is the afternoon and  
evening until midnight

(To help you remember which is  
which, think of “A.M.” as the first  
part of the day, like the letter “A”  
is the first letter in the alphabet.)

You need to use a **calendar** to keep yourself organized. Hang it on your wall or put it on your desk. Write what you need to do in **different colours**.

For example:

1. Paying rent = blue
2. Karate lessons = red
3. School exams = green

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Circle important days. Cross out each day passed.

## Make **routines** that work for you

Decide what parts of your day need a routine.

For example, make a list of all you need to do in the evening.

### **A sample evening routine:**

8:00 – Make lunch for next day

8:30 – Shower and wash hair

8:45 – Brush teeth

9:00 – Pick clothes for the next day

9:15 – Pack school bag

9:30 – Go to sleep

## Make a **routine**

Pick a routine you have trouble remembering and make cue cards.

### Cue Card Routine for Using the Dishwasher

1.  
Scrape food off plate

2.  
Place: plates on bottom rack  
glasses on top rack  
silverware in basket

3.

Put detergent block  
into soap holder

4.

Close soap holder

5.

Press start button

You can add pictures to the cards  
to help you remember what to  
do at each step of the routine.

## Do you put work off for **later** when it can be done **today**?

Everyone does this! You need to first understand **why** you put things off.

Maybe:

- you expect a lot from yourself and want it to be perfect
- you lose sleep because you stay out late
- you are afraid of failing
- you feel pressured to do things you don't want to do
- you are frustrated things aren't working out the way you want them to
- you don't know how to study so you get frustrated and give up.

Talk to yourself...  
No excuses!

If you tend to think "I don't feel like it."

Say to yourself "I never feel like doing work. If I talk like this I will never get anything done."

If you tend to think "I will do it later."

Say to yourself "If I do it now, I can do whatever I want later on."

If you tend to think "I work better under pressure."

Say to yourself "I don't want to leave everything for the last minute. It's too stressful."

# Money

It is a big job to manage your money.  
It can be confusing and frustrating.

You may be thinking...

- How do I pay for everything I need this month?
- What will happen if I don't pay this bill?
- How do I get out of debt?
- How should I save my money?

## Budgeting

This is a word everyone has heard but not everyone understands how to do.

Once you begin to earn money, there are times you will want to just go and spend on what you want... but always consider what you need.

1. Write down how much you will be making and how much you will need for things that you really need.
2. Then make a list of things that you would like to eventually buy.

Make a monthly budget chart to help you see how much money is coming in and how much money you are spending.

### Sample Budget

<b>FIXED</b>	<b>\$</b>
Savings	
Rent	
Groceries	
Bus/Cab	
Phone	
Utilities	
Hygiene	
Other	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

“Fixed” means you’ll have these expenses every month.

You can change some of the categories and add what you spend on other things.

CHANGING	\$
Loans	
Clothes/Shoes	
Entertainment	
Tobacco/Beverages	
Medical/Dental	
Eyeglasses	
Personal	
Other	
TOTAL	

The **Fixed** column is more of what you NEED. These items tend to be the same dollar amount from month to month.

The amount of money you spend in the **Changing** column is usually different every month.

MONEY EARNED	TOTAL \$
Job	
Support income	
Other	
TOTAL	

After you find out how much money you make, take the total and **subtract** how much you spend a month.

\$ SUMMARY	TOTAL \$
Total money earned +	
Money spent -	
TOTAL	
+ or -	

Try to do a similar budget worksheet each month. This should give you an idea of how much money you are spending and how much money you need to live.

For more information on budgeting, go to: [http://www.chicagofed.org/consumer\\_information/budgeting\\_and\\_saving.cfm#2](http://www.chicagofed.org/consumer_information/budgeting_and_saving.cfm#2)

## Tips for Managing Money

When spending money on food, remember: it is often **more expensive to eat out** than to buy groceries to use for more than one meal.

Using **credit cards** is almost **NEVER** a good choice.

**Pay your bills** before spending money on anything else. Have a place where you keep your receipts.

Remember: not everybody can be trusted. **Try not to lend** out things that cost a lot of money.

**Gambling** is not a good choice. Gambling does not make you rich, it makes you poorer.

**Everyone** makes mistakes with money. Small money mistakes are okay, they help you learn about money and how to use it better in the future.

## Getting enough sleep

Do you have difficulties...

falling asleep

staying asleep

waking up?

### During the day

**Avoid caffeine (coffee, chocolate, soft drinks) 6–8 hours before you sleep.**

**Napping.** Most of us get tired between 2 and 4 in the afternoon. If you must nap, do so for less than 30 minutes.

**Don't smoke 2–3 hours before bed.** Smokers take more time to fall asleep and wake up more than non-smokers.

**Avoid marijuana and alcohol.**

Although it can make you feel relaxed, it wakes you up when you are having your most important deep sleep.

**Turn off the TV.** Try not to watch TV, surf the Internet or play video games right before bed. These kinds of activities stimulate your brain and make it harder to fall asleep.

## Going to sleep

**Go to bed when you feel tired.** Try to go to bed the same time each night. It is okay to sleep in on weekends.

Make sure the room is **not too hot or too cold**. Ideal room temperature is 16–18 degrees Celsius.

If you wake up and **cannot fall asleep for more than 30 minutes**, get up. Do not stay in bed.

**Try not to watch the clock.** This may cause you to worry.

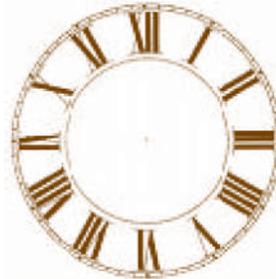
**Your bedroom is a place for sleep.** Try not to eat or watch TV in your bedroom.

**Don't drink a lot before you sleep.** You may have to go to the bathroom during the night.

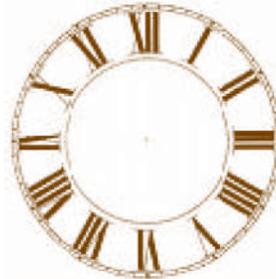
**Don't go to bed hungry.** Try drinking milk or eating turkey or peanut butter. These foods have tryptophan and can help you relax.

### Keep a sleep diary

Time I fell asleep:



Time I woke up:



Hours of sleep I need: 9

Hours I was sleeping       

Hours of sleep to make up

## Do you have a **sleeping problem**?

Use the scale below to rate how **tired** you feel in each situation.

0 – would never feel like sleeping

1 – usually feel a little sleepy

2 – usually would fall asleep

3 – high chance of falling asleep

Sitting and reading \_\_\_\_\_

Watching TV \_\_\_\_\_

In a car for an hour \_\_\_\_\_

Sitting after lunch \_\_\_\_\_

Sitting and talking \_\_\_\_\_

Lying down \_\_\_\_\_

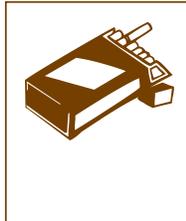
In a class or meeting \_\_\_\_\_

If your total was 10 points or more, you may have a problem that is interfering with sleeping. You might want to talk to your doctor about this.

## LIFE SKILLS

Fill out how much caffeine (coffee, tea, pop), cigarettes, alcohol/drugs you had.

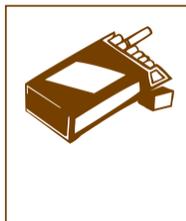
Monday



Tuesday



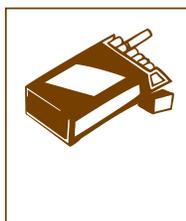
Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Use this chart to compare for a few days and see where you can cut down to get a better night's sleep.

For more information on sleep, go to:

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

## Healthy eating

Do you sometimes eat too much?

Never feel full?

Forget to eat for days?

Crave certain foods?

## Shop smart

Before you go grocery shopping, look at flyers and cut out coupons.

Don't shop when you are hungry.

Shop when you have time to compare prices. Usually the middle shelf has the highest price.

Try to buy in bulk. For example: a big bag of rice is cheaper than a box of instant rice.

Make a list! Look in your cupboards and refrigerator to see what you have and what you need.

Organize your grocery list like the grocery store would have such as:

Grocery List	
<b>Frozen</b> Orange juice Strawberries Fries	<b>Dry food</b> Rice Noodles Cereal
<b>Dairy</b> Milk Cheese Yogurt	<b>Canned goods</b>
<b>Fruits and vegetables</b> Apples Celery Broccoli	<b>Cleaning supplies</b>

## Food labels

You have probably seen a label like this before... Interested in learning what all those numbers mean?

<b>Skim Milk</b>	
Serving Size 8 fl oz (240mL)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories 80</b>	<b>Calories from Fat 0</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat 0g</b>	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cholesterol less than 5mg</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Sodium 130mg</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate 12g</b>	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 11g	
<b>Protein 8g</b>	
<b>Vitamin A 8%</b>	• <b>Vitamin C 4%</b>
<b>Calcium 30%</b>	• <b>Iron 0%</b> • <b>Vitamin D 25%</b>
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories: 2,000    2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g    80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g    25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg    300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg    2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g    375g
Dietary Fiber	25g    30g

- Serving size tells you the number of calories per serving. If a half-cup serving has 50 calories, but

if you eat a one cup serving, you'll be getting 100 calories.

- **Calories** tells you how much food energy is in each serving. The average woman needs about 2,000 calories per day. The average man needs around 2,500 to 2,800. An athlete may need between 3,000 to 4,000 per day.
- **Sodium** refers to "salt." The daily recommended amount for sodium is less than 2,400 mg a day.
- **Carbohydrates** includes sugars, complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber in each serving. Take the number of total carbs, for example 24, and subtract the number of sugars (12). This means that there is only half of healthy carbs.
- **Protein** needs for men and women are between 50 and 75 grams a day. So if the label says 3 grams, that is about 4–6% of your daily needs.

## Food labels

**INGREDIENTS:** Glucose/fructose, brown sugar, whole oat flour, organic wheat bran, organic evaporated cane juice, organic oat bran, organic corn meal, organic brown rice flour, honey, organic barley malt extract, organic whole wheat sprouts, natural colour extracts, wheat flakes, evaporated cane sugar, sodium, malt, salt.

Most foods contain a list of ingredients like the one shown above.

The product has the most of what is listed **FIRST** and then **SECOND** then **THIRD**, etc. There are many words for sugar (fructose, etc.). “Low fat” often means there is more sugar added.

For more information on food package labels, go to: <http://www.askdrsears.com/html/4/T042300.asp>

## Food and mood

You know to make healthy food choices... but do you find that you are not hungry and crave specific foods and wonder why?

If you crave ice cream, you are probably **stressed**. Try a physical activity.

If you crave chips, you are actually **thirsty**. When we crave salt, our body is dehydrated.

If you crave chocolate, you want **relaxation**. Chocolate has magnesium which gives the same feeling as falling in love.

If you crave soda, you need more **calcium**. You can find calcium in cheese, sesame and green vegetables.

If you crave cold drinks, you need more manganese. You can find this in almonds, pecans, walnuts, pineapples, blueberries.

If you crave **tobacco**, try eating nuts, seeds, green and red fruits, and vegetables. Or try a Vitamin C supplement, also found in oranges.

If you crave **alcohol and drugs**, you may be missing protein found in meat. Or avenin found in oatmeal or potassium found in bananas, olives, seaweed.

Your body is telling you that it needs certain vitamins through your cravings. Use this information to make good choices. Think about if you are really hungry or if there is something else going on in your life.

For more information on food cravings, go to: <http://www.naturopathyworks.com/pages/cravings.php>

and/or

[http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/300770/food\\_cravings\\_and\\_what\\_thy\\_really\\_mean.html?page=2](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/300770/food_cravings_and_what_thy_really_mean.html?page=2)

# Dealing with the police

- Have you ever had an encounter with the police?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Have you ever felt that you admitted to a crime you did not commit?
- Have you ever said you understood your legal rights when you did not?
- Did you ever panic and run away from the police?

If you answered YES to any of those questions and have been diagnosed with FASD, you should always carry a **Medical Information Card** to give to police.

## Medical information card

The card explains FASD to the police officer. When a police officer knows you have FASD, he or she is expected to make sure you understand what he or she is asking you and he or she should call a support person for you as soon as possible.

Make several copies of this card to hand out in any kind of emergency situation.

Front of card

**MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR POLICE**

I have a medical diagnosis of **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**. Because of this disability, I may not understand abstract concepts (such as legal rights).

If you need my cooperation or I need help, please call the person listed on the back of this card.

Back of card

For information or assistance regarding:

---

Please contact:

---

---

(See page 117 for a template of this card.)

If you are stopped by a police officer, remain calm. Hand your card to the officer and ask him or her to contact the person named on the back of your card.

## Justice system

- Have you ever gotten in trouble with the **law**?
- Have you ever had to go to **court**?
- Have you ever felt that something you did that got you in trouble was something you could **NOT** control?
- Have you ever felt that what the court decided was not fair and wish there was **more** information available for you?

If the answer is **yes**, then there is information you should know.

## The Youth Criminal Justice Act

The Youth Criminal Justice Act is for youth ages 12 to 17.

**If you have committed a crime, you still have rights.**

A judge, police officer, youth worker, prosecutor may call a conference. This conference will give advice on extrajudicial measures, conditions for release and appropriate sentences.

If you have committed a less serious nonviolent crime, you may not have to go to court; this is called an extrajudicial sanction.

Instead of court, you may get a warning and caution. The police officer will explain what you have done and explain the serious consequences if this happens again.

If you receive an extrajudicial sanction, you will not have a criminal record.

Extrajudicial sanctions will only be used when you admit responsibility for the crime and agree to follow the consequences.

If you do not agree with the sanction or feel you are not guilty, then the case will go to the Youth Justice Court.

# Signs of alcohol abuse

Are you worried that someone from your family or group of friends has a drinking problem...?

Are you worried about yourself?

Here are **some signs** that may suggest a **problem** with alcohol.

Check any that apply to you.

- I feel guilty when I am drinking.
- Sometimes I can't remember what I did or said after drinking.
- I am drinking more often and it takes more alcohol to get me drunk.
- I have tried to cut down on my alcohol use.
- Someone close to me has told me they are worried about my alcohol use.

## SIGNS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

- I am sometimes unable to make it to school or work because of my drinking.
- I have had legal problems as a result of my alcohol use.
- I drink to help me deal with painful feelings.
- I sometimes drink more after a fight, disappointment or if I am under pressure.
- I can't imagine coping with life without alcohol.
- Sometimes I lie to cover up my alcohol use.

If you checked off any of the signs, it is likely that alcohol is causing a negative effect in your life.

**Get help NOW.**

Adapted from AADAC (2002). *What a woman should know: Alcohol and other drugs.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

Do you still have a few questions about FASD?

Check out the answers to some common questions!

**Is there a safe amount of alcohol that a woman can drink when pregnant?**

There is no safe amount. Not even one drink! This includes all wine, beer, coolers and even candy or chocolate with alcohol.

**If a woman had a few drinks before she knew she was pregnant, what should she do now?**

Stop drinking immediately. Different babies are affected more and some less. Not drinking for the rest of the pregnancy will help.

**We're thinking of having a baby, when should I stop drinking?**

If you are female and are planning a pregnancy, you should stop drinking now.

**I am a male, how can I help my partner?**

If you are male, you can be supportive of your partner by not drinking yourself and by discussing with your partner why it is important not to drink during pregnancy.

**How come some women drink during pregnancy and their babies seem fine?**

Every woman and every pregnancy is different. A woman drinking during all her pregnancy could have one child that is born healthy and another child that is born with serious health problems. Also, some FASD-related difficulties may show up when the child is older.

**How is FASD diagnosed?**

**Is there one test?**

No, there is not a single test for FASD. It takes a team to make a medical diagnosis of FASD. The team will gather a history of your life and your mother's pregnancy. They will do a number of different types of assessments and talk with you about what having FASD might mean for you.

Talk to your doctor or social worker if you think you need to find out if you have FASD.

### **Why would I want to know if I have FASD?**

Most people who get a medical diagnosis of FASD, often after they have had many struggles in life, say that getting the diagnosis gives them a sense of relief. They realize they are not stupid or bad people. Instead, they are people who have a medical condition and they need the right kind of help and support so they can do well in life. A medical diagnosis gives you information so you can get this help and support.

### **Some questions to ask yourself**

- Do I know what FASD is?
- Do I tell people what I need?
- Do I ask for help when I need it?
- Do I talk to other youth who have FASD and learn new strategies for school and in my home life?

You may have a dis**ABILITY**. But just like everyone else you have different challenges as well as talents and abilities.

**Are you...**

Creative

Funny

Sociable

Polite

Free-spirited

Understanding

Open-minded

Artistic

Friendly

Good listener

Good babysitter

Good cook



## Think you got skills? Test yourself!

Do you think you know everything about how alcohol affects you?

Find out by taking this quiz!

- 1. When is a safe time to drink when pregnant?*
  - A. no time is safe
  - B. the first three months of a pregnancy
  - C. drinking is safe anytime
- 2. How many babies are estimated to be born with FASD every year in Canada?*
  - A. three babies for every 1000 babies born
  - B. three babies for every 10,000 babies born
  - C. three babies for every 100,000 babies born

## TEST YOURSELF

3. *If there is a healthy alcohol-free pregnancy, how preventable is FASD?*
  - A. 50 percent
  - B. 99 percent
  - C. 100 percent
  
4. *When can a baby be affected by alcohol passed through breast milk?*
  - A. Only when mother drinks when pregnant
  - B. When mother drinks after she has given birth
  - C. Never, baby is not affected
  
5. *Does the amount of alcohol affect men and women the same way?*
  - A. Yes, both men and women are affected the same
  - B. Men are affected more than women
  - C. Women are affected more than men

Answers: 1.-A, 2.-B, 3.-C, 4.-B, 5.-C

# Resources

## Where can I get more help?

Do you need more information about where to get support in your community?

A good starting point is 211 information. This 24-hour service connects you to human services, community programs, and volunteer information.

Within Edmonton dial: 2-1-1

Outside of Edmonton call:  
482-INFO (4636)

[www.211edmonton.info](http://www.211edmonton.info)

**Emergency numbers  
for the Edmonton area**

Alberta Human Resources  
Income Support Contact Centre (24 hrs)  
**(780) 644-5135**

Edmonton Community Services  
Free short-term counselling  
**(780) 496-4999**

Edmonton Food Bank  
**(780) 425-4190**

Sexual Assault Centre  
24-Hour Crisis Line  
**(780) 423-4121**

The Support Network  
Distress Line (24 hrs)  
**(780) 482-4357 (HELP)**

Teen Support Line  
**(780) 428-8336**

Youth Emergency Shelter Society  
**(780) 468-7070**

## Health information Edmonton and area

Birth Control Centre  
**(780) 735-0010**

Boyle McCauley Health Centre  
Provides free medical and dental services  
**(780) 422-7333**

Capital Health Link  
24-hour medical information  
**(780) 408-LINK (5465)**

Pregnancy testing & counselling  
**(780) 735-0010**

**STD / HIV Info Line**  
Information available 24 hours/day  
**1-800-772-2437**

STD & HIV Testing  
**(780) 413-5156**

Streetworks ([www.streetworks.ca](http://www.streetworks.ca))  
Needle exchange program  
**(780) 424-4106**  
(After hours **(780) 990-6641**)

## Legal information Edmonton and area

Boyle Street Co-op  
10116–105 Avenue  
Provides weekly information sessions  
every Tuesday at the drop-in centre  
**(780) 424-4106**

Child & Youth Advocate  
(If you have Child Welfare status)  
**(780) 422-6056**

Edmonton Police Service  
Victim Services Unit (downtown unit)  
**(780) 421-2760**

Elizabeth Fry Society  
Court advocates for female youth  
**(780) 421-1175**

Youth Criminal Defense Office  
Gives legal advice and represents youth  
12–18 years old in Edmonton and Calgary  
**(780) 422-8383**

## Addictions information Edmonton and area

AADAC Recovery Centre  
**(780) 427-4291**

Alateen Program  
**(780) 433-1818**

Alcoholics Anonymous  
**(780) 424-5900**

Bosco Homes  
**(780) 440-0708**

Catholic Social Services  
**(780) 471-1122**

Clean Scene Network for Youth  
**(780) 488-0036**

Gambling Help  
**1-866-332-2322**

McMan Counselling Services  
**(780) 482-4461**

Narcotics Anonymous  
**(780) 421-4429**

Our House Addiction Recovery  
**(780) 474-8945**

## More on FASD

FASD Connections

Resources and forum for teens  
and adults with FASD

<http://fasdconnections.ca>

FAS Resource Mail List

To learn more about FASD

[http://health.groups.yahoo.com/  
group/FASResource](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/FASResource)

Information for Resources in Alberta

<http://fasd.typepad.com>

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- <http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?g=2&r=575>
- <http://www.betterendings.org/equaljustice/chapterone2.htm>
- [http://www.fasaware.co.uk/documentation\\_docs/Lets%20talk%20about%20FASD.pdf](http://www.fasaware.co.uk/documentation_docs/Lets%20talk%20about%20FASD.pdf)
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- [http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/school\\_jobs/school/test\\_terror.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/test_terror.html)
- <http://www.how-to-study.com/Preparing%20to%20Study.htm>
- <http://www.fasbookshelf.com/books.html>
- <http://www.faslink.org/>
- [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/index_e.html)
- [http://www.chicagofed.org/consumer\\_information/budgeting\\_and\\_saving.cfm#2](http://www.chicagofed.org/consumer_information/budgeting_and_saving.cfm#2)

**MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR POLICE**

I have a medical diagnosis of **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**. Because of this disability, I may not understand abstract concepts (such as legal rights).

If you need my cooperation or I need help, please call the person listed on the back of this card.

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## REFERENCES

For information or assistance regarding:

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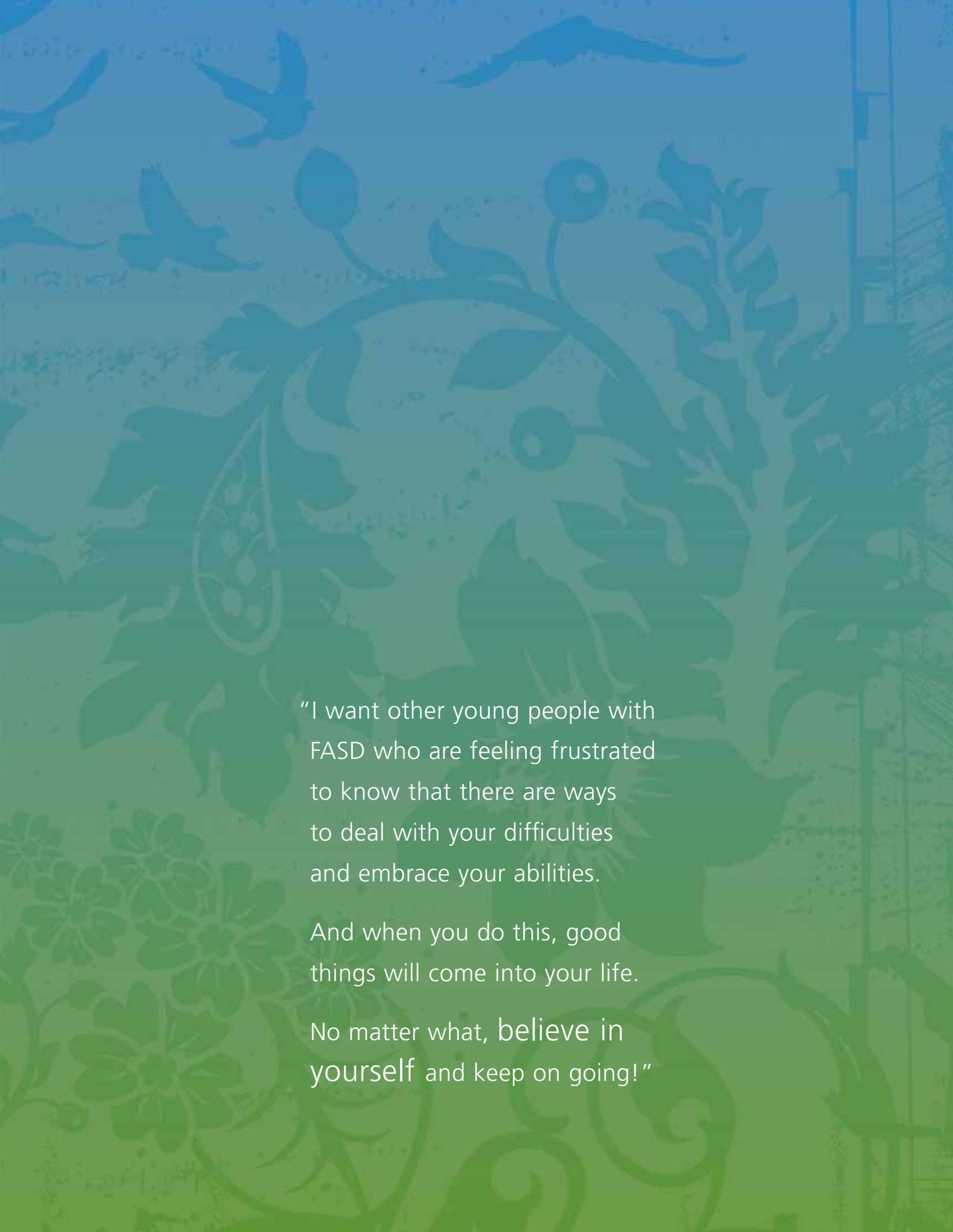
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Please contact:

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“I want other young people with FASD who are feeling frustrated to know that there are ways to deal with your difficulties and embrace your abilities.

And when you do this, good things will come into your life.

No matter what, believe in yourself and keep on going!”