

Start the conversation that could prevent a serious condition which often goes undiagnosed. FASDs are the most common condition associated with intellectual and developmental disabilities that are 100% preventable. As a health care professional/provider (HCP) you can change a life by starting the conversation. But, often it is a difficult one to start.

FASDs: A conversation waiting to happen.

The Arc created this guide to help you talk to women of child-bearing age about their alcohol use. We have addressed the most common obstacles noted by HCPs,* and provided options and resources to help. Find a strategy and plan that works best for you. Be an FASD prevention champion.

Abbreviations used in this guide:

- ACOG—American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- ARHP—Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
- CDC—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- NIAAA—National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
- NOFAS—National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- SAMHSA—Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

This guide and more resources can be found at www.thearc.org/FASD-Prevention-Project.

June 2014

*Based on The Arc’s 2014 survey of physicians, nurses, public and behavioral health professionals and community health representatives.

time constraints?

Do you lack time to discuss alcohol use with women?

you’re not alone!



52% of health care professionals/providers note that time is a factor limiting their discussion of alcohol use with women.*

consider these options

Ask Questions	Set the Stage	Resources
<p>Include questions about alcohol use in your current forms and follow up during the appointment. Start the FASD awareness conversation by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Do you drink?➤ Are you sexually active? <p>Discuss protection and always reiterate:</p> <p>NO amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy.</p>	<p>Provide eye-catching materials (i.e. brochures, posters, videos, etc.) in waiting rooms, clinics and other areas to heighten awareness about FASDs.</p> <p>Train All Staff</p> <p>Provide training and tools so that all staff can screen, intervene or counsel.</p>	<p>See The Arc’s Resource Guide and the following:</p> <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDC: FASD Free Materials www.cdc.gov/fasd• SAMHSA: FASD Catalog fasdcenter.samhsa.gov <p>Tools & Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDC: FASD Training www.cdc.gov/fasd

* data based on a survey conducted by The Arc FASD Prevention Project

denial of alcohol use?

Do your patients seem reluctant to talk about or deny alcohol use?

you’re not alone!



66% of health care professionals/providers believe women’s sensitivity or denial influenced their decisions to talk about alcohol use.*

consider these options

Discuss Health in General	Find an Ally on Staff	Resources
<p>Explain ways alcohol can impact general health. Raise awareness of risk by explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Increased health problems: liver disease, brain damage, and breast cancer➤ Women are more vulnerable than men to alcohol’s effects <p>Discuss protection and always reiterate:</p> <p>NO amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy.</p>	<p>Discuss approaches with staff and identify those who may be able to build a rapport and make women feel more comfortable with discussing alcohol use.</p> <p>Request Training</p> <p>Request training from organizations like The Arc to help learn ways to navigate difficult issues.</p>	<p>See The Arc’s Resource Guide and the following:</p> <p>Alcohol and Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDC: Alcohol Fact Sheets www.cdc.gov/alcohol <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Arc: www.thearc.org• SAMHSA: fasdcenter.samhsa.gov• NOFAS: www.nofas.org/

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unclear about the research?

Are you unsure or disagree with the research about FASDs?

you’re not alone!



37% of health care professionals/providers feel the same way.*

consider these options

Follow Expert Advice	Consider the Impact	Learn from those Affected
<p>Rely on trusted resources. The U.S. Surgeon General’s office states “no amount” of alcohol is safe during pregnancy. Other government agencies and FASD experts agree and advise giving this consistent message:</p> <p>NO amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy.</p>	<p>FASDs are conditions with lifelong consequences, and are 100% preventable. At least 38 million adults drink too much, yet only 1 in 6 adults talk to professionals about it. A short, simple conversation with you can change a life for the better.</p>	<p>People with FASDs and their families are excellent teachers. Contact The Arc’s FASD Prevention Project at 1-800-433-5255 to connect with someone who can share their story with you and your colleagues.</p> <p>Watch personal stories on the NOFAS YouTube Channel www.nofas.org/ video.</p>

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discomfort with the issue?

Talking about alcohol use with women makes you feel uncomfortable?

you’re not alone!



20% of health care professionals/providers feel discussions of this sort are difficult.*

consider these options

Frame it as a Health Issue	Start a Conversation	Resources
<p>Introduce the topic with other prevention-related topics such as smoking, diet, etc. List the impact of alcohol on the body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Damage to brain, liver, heart, pancreas and immune system➤ May cause cancer➤ Developmental damage to fetus if your are pregnant or considering getting pregnant	<p>The more you talk about it, the easier it gets. Review materials provided by The Arc to help describe FASD prevention in a way that works comfortably for you. Ask questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Have you ever had an alcoholic drink?➤ Do you know the risks associated with drinking while pregnant?➤ Have you heard about FASDs?	<p>See The Arc’s Resource Guide and the following:</p> <p>Alcohol and Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDC: Alcohol Fact Sheets www.cdc.gov/alcohol• NIAAA: Alcohol & Health rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDC: FASD Free Materials www.cdc.gov/fasd• CDC: Vital Signs Alcohol www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/

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who's responsible?

Unsure who is the best person to talk with women about alcohol use?

you're not alone!

45% of health care professionals/providers feel the same way.*

consider these options

Screen Everyone

Experts agree that all health care professionals/providers should learn how to screen and counsel on alcohol use. It takes 3 simple steps:

- Screen all women of child-bearing age
- Assess if they are drinking at risky levels
- Follow up with additional information or a referral, if appropriate

Get Ideas from Staff

Have a brainstorming session in a staff meeting to determine the best ways staff can have conversations with women about alcohol use and make it part of their regular routine.

Have a Plan

Create a protocol for how to incorporate FASD-related information during your appointments at a number of contact points through the woman's visit.

Resources

See The Arc's Resource Guide and the following:

Screening & Intervention

- CDC: Alcohol Fact Sheets www.cdc.gov/alcohol
- ACOG: Clinician Guide www.womenandalcohol.org
- SAMHSA: SBIRT Resources beta.samhsa.gov/sbirt
- CDC: Alcohol Screening www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns

* data based on a survey conducted by The Arc FASD Prevention Project

need more training?

Interested in enhancing your interview/screening skills to be more effective?

you're not alone!

33% of health care professionals/providers feel they would benefit from additional training.*

consider these options

Know Your Options

Learn about effective evidence-based FASD screening tools and choose one that works for you. Most include 3 simple steps:

- Screen all women of child-bearing age
- Assess if they are drinking at risky levels
- Follow up with additional information or a referral, if appropriate

Improve Your Skills

Request training from organizations like The Arc or watch FASD training videos, listen to podcasts, read materials on screening and interviewing to help you address the issue more effectively.

Try This Video

CDC's Dr. Joe Snizek discusses steps you can take to detect and intervene with women at risk. www.youtube.com/watch?v=XX1NbstT258

Resources

See The Arc's Resource Guide and the following:

Screening Tools

- NIAAA: Clinical Guides pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/
- ACOG: Clinician Guide www.womenandalcohol.org
- SAMHSA: SBIRT Resources beta.samhsa.gov/sbirt
- ARHP: CE Course www.thearc.org/FASD-Prevention-Project/resources/courses

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reimbursement?

Concerned that alcohol screening, assessment and counseling is not billable?

you're not alone!

34% of health care professionals/providers share your concern.*

consider these options

Know the Codes

Reimbursement is available from many payers, but additional effort may be needed to establish an efficient billing system. For private payers, make sure to call the health plan on how to bill and familiarize yourself with the billing codes.

SAMHSA-HRSA: www.integration.samhsa.gov
search: *Reimbursement for SBIRT & SBIRT Financing*

Contact Your Medicaid Office

Medicaid coverage for alcohol screening and brief counseling requires approval by the state's Medicaid plan. Contact your state's Medicaid office to see whether and how to bill. Learn more about how to bill and code for screening.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services: www.cms.gov

search: *SBIRT Fact Sheet & Reduce Alcohol Misuse*

Learn More about The ACA

Learn more about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which requires new health insurance plans to cover alcohol screening and brief counseling.

www.healthcare.gov
www.hhs.gov/healthcare

* data based on a survey conducted by The Arc FASD Prevention Project

lack referral sources?

Reluctant to bring up alcohol use because you are unsure of resources?

you're not alone!

49% of health care professionals/providers have the same concern.*

consider these options

Connect with SAMHSA

You can find SAMHSA's Behavioral Treatment Locator by visiting findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Call SAMHSA's National Helpline

1-800-662-4357 (voice)
1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

Connect with NOFAS

Find affiliates of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) by visiting www.nofas.org/affiliates-partners.

Connect with The Arc

Contact The Arc's FASD Prevention Project to connect with your local chapter of The Arc and other FASD-related resources who can help.

FASDInfo@thearc.org
1-800-433-5255

Find Your State Resources

FASD Efforts by State fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/statesystemsofcare/statesystemsofcare.aspx

NOFAS Resource Directory www.nofas.org/resource-directory/

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Alcohol & Pregnancy

it's just not worth the risk



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Prevention Project