

MAKING FASD HISTORY: A MULTI-SITE PREVENTION PROGRAM

SUMMARY: Capacity building activities in Newcastle, NSW

Findings from consultations with Youth Justice and alcohol and other drug (AOD) stakeholders in Newcastle, undertaken as part of the “[Making FASD history: A Multi-Site Prevention Program](#)”, demonstrated a need for capacity building opportunities about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). A request was also made by the Newcastle Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) for more information on FASD and how it presents in the Justice and Education Systems. As a result, activities were created to build capacity in the local workforce involved in the prevention and management of FASD. These included:

- A community forum to share experiences, skills, and knowledge across sectors
- Workforce development and training to enhance skills and knowledge
- Development of factsheets for education and awareness raising

COMMUNITY FORUM: The community FASD forum was held on International FASD Awareness Day in 2019. The forum was primarily targeted to health and justice professionals, youth workers, Out of Home care workers, legal professionals and those working with individuals who may have a cognitive impairment or FASD. Eight speakers presented at the forum, all discussing FASD in their area of expertise. A ‘Questions and Answer’ panel discussion was held at the end of the day.

The FASD Forum was attended by 65 people. Perceptions of the FASD Forum were assessed at the end of the day via a survey. Overall, the forum had a high rate of attendance and was positively received. Most respondents indicated the information was useful to their work.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: The workforce development training was delivered in 2020 and was held over two days. Day 1 consisted of a Masterclass that provided participants with the knowledge and confidence to share information on FASD, resources and strategies with their colleagues and communities. Day 2 consisted of a practical workshop, providing skills for assisting children with FASD to use sensory strategies to regulate behaviour. Both training days included a one-hour presentation on how to work with the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The FASD training was attended by 40 people. Attendees were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the training via a brief survey. Across the 2 days most attendees agreed that the content of the training was relevant and current. They also stated that the sessions gave them an understanding of the issues that individuals with FASD face day to day.

FACTSHEETS: The aim of these resources was to raise awareness of FASD amongst service providers and staff working with young people. A review of websites, FASD support organisations and peer-reviewed publications was performed, to gain consumer-informed and current information. Three sets of factsheets were developed:

- What is FASD?
- What does FASD look like in the Classroom?
- What does FASD look like in the Justice System?

Each Factsheet included extensive information, designed for service providers and professionals. In addition, a brief, pamphlet-style factsheet summarised the content for quick reference. Approximately 300 digital copies and 500 hardcopies of each set of factsheets were distributed to service providers. The Fact Sheets developed as part of this activity are now available online [here](#).

References available on request.

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