

FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)

The Correct Language To Use For FASD – Part 1



People with FASD

Please use:	Instead of:	Why?
Person or Individual with FASD	Suffering with FASD Damaged by FASD	<p>Many people who have FASD find these words offensive because they imply that they are not living happy, productive lives. People with disabilities prefer others to focus on their strengths and positive attributes.</p> <p>People with FASD don't perceive themselves in negative ways and aren't looking for people to feel sorry for them.</p>
	Living with FASD	The FASD community has removed 'living with' to reflect the language used to describe other disabilities/conditions.
	FASD kids	FASD is not limited to children, and is not necessarily a lifelong problem. The FASD community prefers to use 'person-first' language. This means that you talk about a person who has a disability (as well as many other traits) rather than presenting the disability as the whole of who they are. Another example would be 'a person with an addiction' rather than an 'addict'.
	(Innocent) victims or injured	These words imply that there has been a perpetrator and are very negative towards mothers. Many people with FASD do not blame their mothers, and they don't want others to. Birth mothers do not seek to harm their children. This language may jeopardise both a woman's willingness to seek help and a child's future relationships with their mother.

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Please use:	Instead of:	Why?
Affected/impacted by	Afflicted by	The term 'afflicted' presumes that the person does not lead a happy, productive life. 'Affected by' presents a more neutral tone to this disability.
Support person/circle/network/coach	External brain	The term 'external brain' was created many years ago to give people an understanding that someone with FASD may require coaching from others at times to help with certain brain functions, like memory, problem-solving, managing money, or everyday living. However, it has since been rejected by some as being offensive because it implies that they need a whole new brain to be 'normal'. A 'support person' is a more accurate and neutral term.
Cognitive or neurodevelopmental disability	Mentally disabled	'Cognitive disability' is a more respectful terminology to describe people who may have cognitive challenges or a low IQ.

Adapted from Manitoba FASD Coalition, Language guide: Promoting dignity for those impacted by FASD, Manitoba FASD Coalition, Manitoba, 2017, www.fasdcoalition.ca/looking-after-each-otherproject/fasd-language-guide.

Adapted by Get into Neurodiversity for a global audience.

Source: Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre is proudly supported by the Australian Government.

