



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE  
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE

## **Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Acknowledges International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day**

OTTAWA (September 9, 2013) Today, the Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) acknowledges the global initiative of International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day.

Every year on September 9<sup>th</sup>, people all around the world collaborate to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking during pregnancy. The first FASD Awareness Day was celebrated on 9/9/99. This day was chosen so that on the ninth day of the ninth month, people will remember that during the nine months of pregnancy, a woman should abstain from alcohol.

“This special day helps to further a better understanding of the effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol and its resulting disabilities,” said CCPA President, Blythe Shepard. “While FASD cannot be cured, increased global awareness will greatly contribute to prevention and recognition of this often disabling disorder.”

The impact of exposure to alcohol during pregnancy leaves individuals living with FASD with a wide range of cognitive, physiological and behavioral conditions. Because FASD is a permanent condition without a cure, people affected by FASD often live with mental health issues that require ongoing, additional support in their day to day lives.

While people live with FASD for their entire life, early diagnosis and intervention is important to their success in school, at play, and in the workforce. A strong support system that includes timely resources and interventions by professionals including school counsellors, special educators and clinicians will assist individuals in reaching their potential. CCPA includes a dedicated chapter specifically for school counselling, and has a vested interest in ensuring that all children and youth have access to trained school counsellors in every school.

“Many of our Canadian Certified Counsellors have specific training and experience in supporting individuals affected by FASD, particularly those working with children and youth in schools,” added Shepard.

Students living with FASD have a variety of challenges and special needs. School counsellors are in an optimal position to work with students as well as to educate teachers and other school professionals on specific strategies, interventions and resources that are available in order to meet these needs.

“School counsellors often receive referrals for students who are having difficulty communicating or fitting in due to learning deficits or behavioural issues in the classroom. These issues can be related to a wide variety of conditions, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder,” said Shepard. “We have CCPA Canadian Certified Counsellors in schools across the country who are committed to engaging in ongoing professional development and making a positive difference in the lives of children and youth.”

“FASD Awareness Day is a vital opportunity to help spread awareness, highlight the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy, and build on prevention efforts,” concluded Shepard. “Counsellors and psychotherapists are part of the continuum of care in primary health care and make vital contributions to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians. We remain committed to working together to help improve the quality of life of individuals and families living with FASD.”

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*The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians. For more information on the counselling and psychotherapy profession, please visit [www.ccpa-accp.ca](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca) or [www.talkingcanhelp.ca](http://www.talkingcanhelp.ca).*

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