



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

Raising Awareness for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder *Counsellors and Psychotherapists Acknowledge 15th Annual Awareness Day*

OTTAWA (September 9, 2014) Today, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is recognizing International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day.

In its 15th year, this initiative began on September 9th, 1999, a date specifically chosen to represent the nine months of pregnancy where a woman should refrain from alcohol use. FASD is caused by the use of alcohol during pregnancy. According to Health Canada, FASD is the leading known cause of preventable developmental disability among Canadians. It is estimated that FASD affects approximately one percent of the Canadian population. About 95% of people with FASD are also diagnosed with a mental illness. Most alarming, 60% of those with FASD have been charged with, or convicted of a crime.

“Unfortunately, people who live with FASD are impacted for their entire life, but that does not need to be a negative impact,” said CCPA President, Blythe Shepard. “Early diagnosis and intervention is important to their success in school, at play, and in the workforce. “Providing a strong support system is imperative to prevent secondary difficulties related to FASD such as disrupted school experience, inappropriate sexual behaviour, substance abuse, problems with employment and mental health problems. These characteristics can contribute to individuals with FASD becoming involved in the justice system. Timely resources and interventions by professionals including school counsellors, special educators and clinicians can assist individuals in reaching their potential.”

CCPA supports efforts to prevent, diagnose, and establish early identification and management strategies that will improve the quality of life for individuals with FASD. While FASD cannot be cured, increased global awareness will greatly contribute to the prevention, diagnosis, early identification and management of the disorder.

“With detailed and specific training and experience, individuals facing FASD can be effectively supported and assisted. Many of our Canadian Certified Counsellors have the training and experience that people with FASD and their families seek,” added Shepard.

When interventions and resources are adequately implemented in school settings by counsellors, educators and school professionals, students with FASD benefit from specific, differentiated strategies they need to find success in school and expand life choices. In the justice system qualified counsellors can provide successful supports to offenders with FASD that includes building relationships of trust.

“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 across the country who are committed to engaging in ongoing professional development, and making changes that improve the quality of life for adults, children and youth with this disorder”

For more information on FASD, visit <http://www.fasday.com/>

health and well-being of all Canadians. For more information on the counselling and psychotherapy profession, please visit www.ccpa-accp.ca or www.talkingcanhelp.ca.

For further information, please contact:

Emily Reid, Office: (613) 233-8906, Cell: (613) 796-4708, ccpa@impactcanada.com