

Country and Community

We are country and community strong here in northwestern Alberta! We are united and supportive of each other and our communities, living in a beautiful and bio-diverse land. However, our homes, communities and land have been experiencing many natural disasters over the past and present years. This can be very stressful and worse if you are displaced and lost your home. It is very concerning . How do we continue to thrive in an environment that continues to change right before our very eyes?

- ◆ Continue to provide support to a neighboring community, when and where you can
- ◆ If you are an evacuee, accept the support that is out there and know it is ok not to be ok. Talk to the support staff and volunteers; that is why they are there.
- ◆ Take inventory of what you need now and what you will need in the future and work towards rebuilding what you have lost. It will take time to adjust to the new. It will never be the same as what you lost but you will eventually get what you need.
- ◆ It helps to journal, to take inventory of what you are feeling and thinking. It can act a form of release to what is happening now. When you reflect, you will see how far you have come emotionally and it might feel good to know that you have grown.
- ◆ Go for a walk; it helps to clear your mind, release endorphins (chemicals in your brain that make you feel good) and helps to sleep better
- ◆ Rest when you can, even if it is more than what you normally do
- ◆ Deep breathing; purposely slow down your breathing and take deep breaths, allow relaxation to begin
- ◆ Drink water; your mind and body needs a lot of water
- ◆ Connect; when possible write, call or message a friend or close family. Connection plays a role in our overall wellness

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Box 3668, 10502-103 Street
High Level, AB, T0H1Z0
780-926-3375
NWR-FASD.AB.CA



Transitioning and FASD

Transitioning from task to task is something that comes natural for most of us but for someone with FASD it could take some time. This person may need some guidance to transition more smoothly into another task or to go to bed or to enter into adulthood.

Routines and schedules provide comfort in knowing what to expect and when to expect it.

Providing a countdown to help transition from one activity to another is another way to prevent a meltdown or escalation. An example could be that “we are leaving in 15 minutes,” then “we are leaving in 10 minutes” and then “5 minutes” and “ok, it’s time for us to leave now.” Some people use chain links to show the countdown for when it is time to leave or time to stop playing.

Perseveration (Locking into a behavior) may occur during a transitioning period. Be aware of emotional thresholds as this could happen because the next step is too difficult. For each child, the pattern of perseveration is usually predictable. Try the 3 D’s; Displace, Divert and re-Direct.

Create routines. For example, use colored dots on a calendar to match colored clothing to keep them from wearing the same clothes everyday. When traveling or moving, show pictures of actual people traveling or a miniature moving truck, plane or train showing what that will look like before it is to happen. When in the new place, keep the seating the same as it was in the old place. The more you keep things the same-the less impact the transition will have.

Transitioning into adulthood requires planning and preparation. Make sure that all assessments are up to date. Identify who is part of the transitioning team? Prepare supports for help with daily living and/or moving into supportive living. Will there be a financial advisor to support paying the bills and rent? Provide a medical history if the person is taking medication long term along with their physician’s name and number. Regardless of what future plans look like, preparation for the transition takes time and needs to be thought out. Most likely, the person in transition will require life long supports and it is important to plan for that.

