



April 14, 2020

To communities and individual's we serve:

Hi to everyone as you continue to follow the guidance of our health experts on preventing further spread of the virus. I hope the promise of spring is lifting your spirits and creating some excitement for the warmer weather!

As we continue to support our children, youth and adults during this pandemic, we need to remember that the way their brains and body interpret situations may be different than how we interpret things. As the pandemic continues you may experience being tired, frustrated, overwhelmed and fearful among other emotions.

Remember our children, whether youth or adults may be **emotional mirrors**. What that means is that the individual impacted with FASD that you are caring for will feel the emotions you are feeling, though they most likely will not be able to express or understand that. It means that we as parents or caregivers must have a sense of **where we are emotionally** so we can better guide our children to understand their emotional reactions on a daily basis.

“ I am feeling frustrated today because I would like to go and visit my mom, my sister, etc”. **Identify what you are feeling, teach others in the house to identify what they are feeling** so the individual impacted with FASD can also understand and identify their feelings. If we do not identify the emotion for them, they will interpret the emotion they are feeling from you as anger. “You are mad at me!” because they have no word for it but they feel your emotion very intensely.

If you are worried about what is happening with the pandemic, let them know that sometimes you worry but that you know everything will be okay because we are all doing what the doctors are telling us about washing our hands, washing everything we touch and staying home.

Not every emotion is from the individual's ability to feel our emotions. They have their own as well, but often will need help identifying what it is: frustration, joy, happy, sad, overwhelmed, confused, edgy, etc. Provide the word for the emotion for your individual to help them learn the differences in each emotion and what the triggers might be for that emotion. Naming our children's emotions may help us better monitor our own.

Please take care of yourself, your family and your neighbours. Stay in touch. Thank you for keeping in touch with our frontline workers as they call, text, message and Facebook those they support from home!

Wanda Beland

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