

## Why the FASD knot?

In the late 1990's, a group of biological and adoptive/foster parents in Canada and New Zealand got together to decide how best to create awareness and share information regarding the management of children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) across the globe. They were concerned about the lack of information regarding FASD. An online support group was created and many people across the world experiencing the same issues started making contact and supporting each other. This eventually led to the establishment of an International FAS Day. The first International FAS Day was held on 9 September 1999 (09/09/1999) and was also commemorated in Cape Town, South Africa.

### Why 9<sup>th</sup> September?

The symbolism of 9 is very important, as a woman is normally pregnant for 9 months. The number 9 is therefore utilised.

What happens on the 9<sup>th</sup> September?

Participants are encouraged to do the following:

- Meet on the 9<sup>th</sup> September at 09h00 and share the FASD prevention message,
- Have one minute of silence at 09h08 to think about individuals affected by FASD and their primary care-givers / educators,
- Break the silence at 09h09 by ringing a bell thereby calling people to take action and create awareness about FASD and that pregnant women should not drink any alcohol during her 9 months of pregnancy.

Participants are encouraged to wear the FASD knot on the day.

### What is the FASD knot?

The chord is tied in the knot known as a reef knot or Canadian knot. The knot is worn on your chest to support and inform the world about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and as a sign that the person wearing the knot is in support of the FASD prevention message.

The knot symbolises the following:

- Cord with worn ends – the umbilical cord through which the baby receives food and unfortunately also alcohol from the pregnant woman; the central nervous system (brain) which can be permanently damaged by the alcohol;
- Knot – this type of knot is so strong that it will not break if traction is put on it – in fact it will pull tighter. This symbolises the strong support that we are supposed to give pregnant women and people with FASD.
- The circle inside the knot – symbolises the uterus of the pregnant woman which should provide a safe environment for the unborn baby to develop free from alcohol.



## How to make your FASD knot:

### FASD knot



## What is the FASD prevention message?

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is the most severe form of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

When a woman drinks, her unborn baby is affected by the alcohol. The alcohol she consumes is transported through the bloodstream to the unborn baby (fetus). The alcohol is poisonous (toxic) for the unborn baby and it may affect any of the unborn baby's organs. The brain is most vulnerable organ. For this reason, all children with FAS have a mild to severe degree of permanent brain damage. FASD is world-wide and the main cause of preventable mental disabilities.

There are still many myths around FASD. Some people still believe that a woman must be an alcoholic to have a child with FASD. Therefore the prevention message that must be spread is:

- No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy
- FASD causes permanent damage, but it is 100% preventable