

August 2015

9 SEPTEMBER INTERNATIONAL FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD) DAY

Background

In the late nineties, 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 Disorder (FASD) across the globe. They were concerned about the lack of information regarding FASD. An online parental support group was formed and this eventually led to the establishment of an International FASD day. The first International FASD Day was held on 9 September 1999 (09/09/1999) and was also commemorated in South Africa.

Why 9 September?

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

What happens on the 9 September?

Members of the public who are interested in raising awareness regarding FASD are requested to share the prevention message with small groups of friends/colleagues or other community members in doing the following:

- Meet on 9 September at 09h00 and share a short FASD prevention message (See below how it can be done);
- Have one minute of silence at 09h08 to think about individuals affected by FASD and their primary caregivers/educators;
- Break the silence at 09h09 by ringing a bell (or bells, e.g. church, school or hand bells) thereby calling people to take action and create awareness about FASD, especially regarding the need for pregnant women not to drink any alcohol during the 9 months of pregnancy.

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

What is the FASD knot?

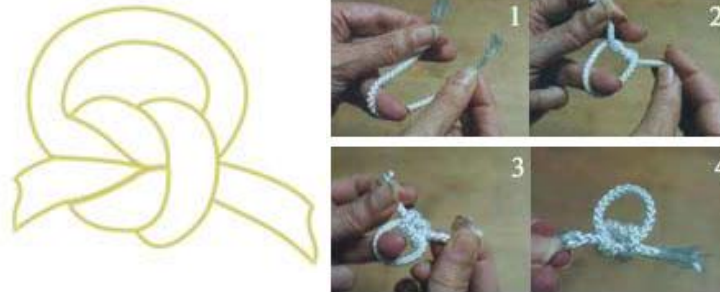
The white cord is tied in a knot known as the reef knot or the Canadian knot. The knot is worn on your chest to support and to inform the world about FASD and as a sign that the person wearing the knot is in support of the FASD prevention message.

The knot symbolises the following:

- *Cord with worn ends*: the umbilical cord whereby the baby receives food and unfortunately also alcohol from the pregnant woman; and 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, it will pull tighter. This symbolizes the strong support that we are supposed to give pregnant women and people with FASD.

- *The circle inside the knot:* Symbolizes the uterus/womb of the pregnant woman which should provide a safe environment for the unborn baby to develop free from alcohol.

FASD Awareness Knot



What is the FASD prevention message?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) as the most severe form of these disorders, is the most common cause of permanent mental disability in the world.

When a pregnant women drinks, her unborn baby is damaged by the alcohol. The alcohol she consumes is absorbed through the bloodstream and reaches the unborn baby (fetus). The alcohol is poisonous (toxic) for the unborn baby and it may damage any of the unborn baby's organs. The brain is the most vulnerable organ. For this reason, all children with FASD have a mild to severe degree of permanent brain damage. This condition is permanent and cannot be cured by medication.

There are still many myths around FASD. Some people still believe that a women 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.***

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Augustus 2015

9 SEPTEMBER INTERNASIONALE FETALE ALKOHOL SPEKTRUM AFWYKING DAG

Agtergrond

In die laat negentig-jare het 'n groep besorgde ouers en pleegouers in Kanada en Nieu-Zeeland byeengekom om te beraadslaag oor die gebrek aan inligting rakende die hantering van kinders met Fetale Alkohol Spektrum Afwyking (FASA). Hulle was ook besorgd oor die gebrek aan kennis oor FASA in die wêreld. Ten einde raad het hul internet kontak probeer maak met ouers in soortgelyke omstandighede. Dit het gelei tot die stigting van 'n Internasionale FASA Dag wat sou poog om die wêreld se aandag op FASA en die voorkoming daarvan te vestig. Die eerste Internasionale FASA-dag het op 9 September 1999 (09-09-1999) plaasgevind en is ook in Suid-Afrika gedenk.

Hoekom 9 September?

Die simboliek van '9' is baie belangrik, want 'n vrou is normaalweg 9 maande swanger. Die syfer 9 word dus ten volle benut.

Wat word op 9 September gedoen?

Deelnemers word versoek om die volgende te doen:

- Op 9 September om 09h00 byeen te kom om 'n kort voorkomingsboodskap van FASA (sien hieronder) te deel;
- Om 09h08 'n minuut van stilte te huldig waartydens daar gedink word aan diegene wat FASA het en hul versorgers/opvoeders;
- Om 09h09 word die stilte verbreek deur die lui van 'n klok (bv. Kerk-, skool- of handklokke) om almal tot aksie te roep in die stryd om die voorkoming van FASA en die ondersteuning van swanger vroue om nie alkohol tydens swangerskap te drink nie.

Deelnemers word ook versoek om die FASA-strikkie te dra.

Wat is die FASA-strikkie?

Dit is 'n wit tou-strikkie wat in die vorm van 'n Vissermansknoop ('Canadian knot') geknoop is. Dit word op die bors vasgesteek om bewusmaking te bevorder en om aan te dui dat die draer die FASA-voorkomingsboodskap uitleef.

Die strikkie simboliseer die volgende:

- *Tou met uitgerafelde ente*: die umbilikale koord (naelstring) waardeur die ongebore baba voedsel en ongelukkig ook alkohol van die swanger moeder ontvang; en die sentrale senuweestelsel (brein) wat permanent deur die alkohol beskadig word kan word en breinskade veroorsaak.

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- *Knoop*: Dië tipe knoop is so stewig dat dit nie kan breek nie, as daar trekking op gesit word, sal dit net stywer trek. Dit simboliseer die sterk ondersteuning wat aan die vroue en persone met FASA gegee moet word.
- *Die sirkel binne die knoop*: Simboliseer die uterus (baarmoeder) van die swanger vrou wat 'n veilige ontwikkelingsarea vir die ongebore baba behoort te bied en vry van alkohol behoort te wees.

FASA-bewusmakingstrikkie



Wat is die FASA-voorkomingsboodskap?

Fetale Alkohol Spektrum Afwyking (FASA), met Fetale Alkohol Sindroom (FAS) as die ernstigste vorm van hierdie afwykings, is wêreldwyd die grootste oorsaak van verstandelike vertraging (of verstandelike gestremdheid).

Wanneer 'n swanger vrou alkohol inneem, word haar ongebore baba beskadig deur die alkohol. Die alkohol wat sy inneem word geabsorbeer deur die bloedstroom en bereik die ongebore baba (fetus). Die alkohol is giftig (toksies) vir die ongebore baba en dit mag enige van die ongebore baba se organe beskadig. Die brein is veral weerbaar, daarom het alle kinders met FASA 'n matige tot ernstige vorm van permanente brein skade. Hierdie toestand is permanent en kan nie deur medikasie genees word nie.

Daar is baie mites oor FASA. So glo sommige mense steeds dat 'n vrou 'n alkoholis moet wees om 'n kind met FASA te hê. Die voorkomingsboodskap wat dus versprei moet word is:

***Geen alkohol is veilig tydens swangerskap nie.
FASA is 'n permanente toestand, maar gelukkig 100% voorkombaar.***

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