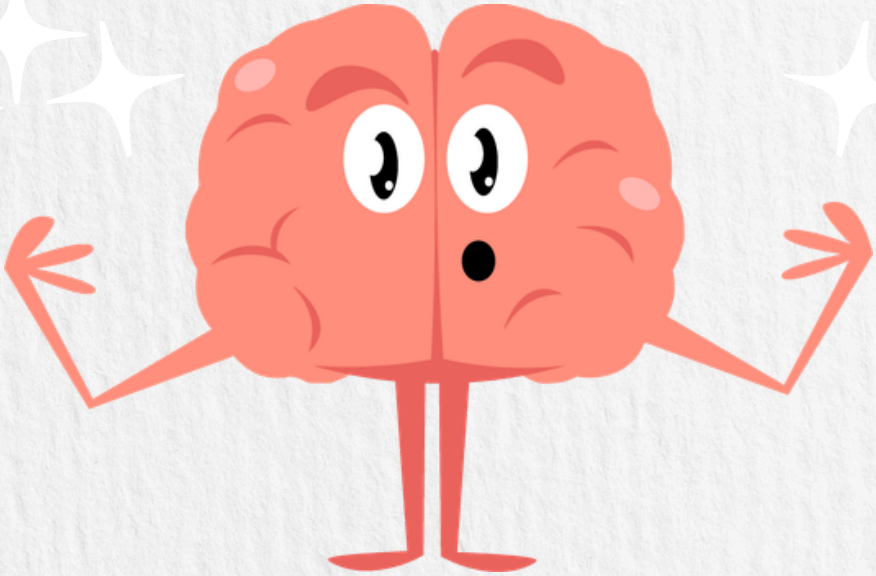
They think I might have FASD

What does that mean?



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Before you go any further...

We want you to remember you have MANY strengths and many things you are good at. Those strengths will help you.

People who care about you are trying to make sure you have the information you need to live your best life.

Someone has noticed that no matter how hard you try, you are struggling in some ways.

They want to help make things easier for you by understanding the reasons why things might be so difficult.

There is a lot of information here.
Ask a trusted adult to help you look through this information.

What is FASD?

FASD stands for **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.** It happens when a baby's brain and body were affected before they were born by a chemical called ethanol that is in alcoholic drinks.

FASD lasts a lifetime but there are strategies that help.

If a woman drinks alcohol when she is pregnant, the alcohol goes into the baby.

A birth mum may not have known about the dangers of drinking alcohol in pregnancy, they might not have known they were pregnant, or maybe they had problems or addiction, which might have made stopping alcohol hard.

Why is it important to know if I have FASD?

The UK's leading experts say if someone has FASD it's important for them to know how FASD affects them.

It will help them understand themselves better. It helps them know there is a reason why some things can be hard and why they do certain things.

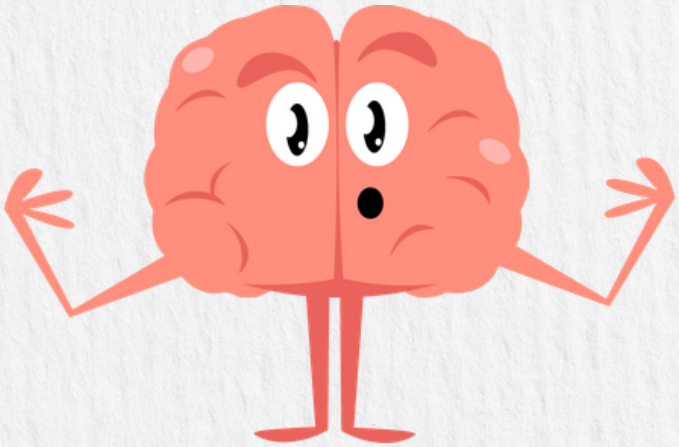
When someone knows about their FASD they can learn strategies that help.

It also can help them explain their FASD to others. It can help them get the right kind of support and benefits that they deserve.

Feelings about the cause of FASD

It's normal to have lots of different feelings about having (or maybe having) FASD and its cause.

It's important to talk to someone about this if you need to, you are not alone. You could talk to people who care about you and support you, like a teacher or a doctor.



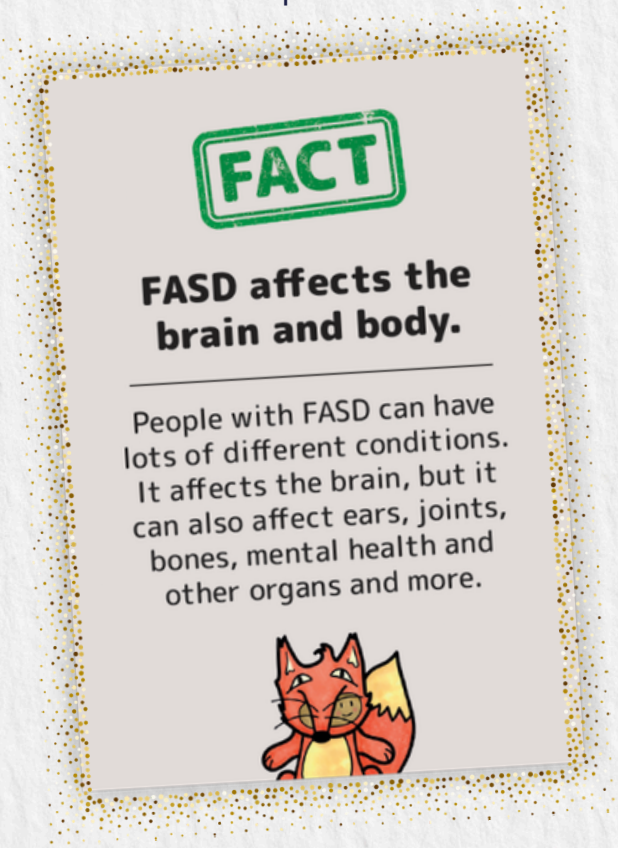
Are any of these hard for you?

Here are some things people with FASD can struggle with.

Are any of these hard for you?

Tick the ones you struggle with

If some do, it doesn't mean you definitely have FASD but it's important to know



- Mental maths, being on time, managing money
- Paying attention
- Learning
- Sensory challenges
- Remembering
- Keeping things tidy
- Staying calm
- Sleep
- Impulse control - doing things without thinking
- Saying things that cause problems in some situations
- Looking after yourself to stay clean and eat well
- Other health issues - including problems with coordination
- Understanding the impact of your choices
- Learning from experience
- Being in a classroom or busy place
- Keeping friends, understanding social situations
- Processing things that people say or that you hear, getting stuck on one topic

Everyone with FASD is different

Listen to this video where people with FASD explain that FASD is slightly different for everyone.

Listen to this song where people with FASD explain what it's like to have FASD.

FACT

People with FASD are good at many things.

They are often friendly, creative, loyal, musical, athletic, artistic, loving, determined and lots more!

Waiting for assessments

It can take a long time (sometimes a couple of years) to get an assessment.

In the meantime you can do some things that might help.

Reasonable adjustments

People who are affected are entitled to what are called 'reasonable adjustments' at school, at work and in clubs and other places. You don't need a diagnosis to ask about these.

These should be appropriate for you and your FASD.

mencap

Mencap has information here about reasonable adjustments. Not everyone has a learning disability, but the ideas here can still help.

FASD UK ALLIANCE

If you are being told it's hard to get assessed for FASD in your area, contact a local FASD support group for help if there is one near you. You can find one via the FASD UK Alliance. Talk with your GP or Paediatrician, or maybe even write to your local health board.

NHS
Surrey and Borders Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

The National Clinic in Surrey can also offer advice, sometimes funding can be arranged for people to be diagnosed here.

How do they diagnose FASD?

You will have 'assessments'.

These are almost always done in person.

You might need to travel a little to see the right experts.

They will find out:

- what your strengths are
- how your brain works
- how you communicate
- how your memory works
- and more!

They are going to talk with you, your parents, carers or guardians, teachers, other doctors and look through your records.

They will show you some pictures and ask lots of questions.

It can be tiring but they will give you breaks.

These assessments will help you and those who support you to understand what your strengths are and what you might need help with.

In the meantime...

...think about what calms you

- You don't need to have had assessments to try some strategies to help you.
- You can try them while you wait for your assessments.
- Even if you don't have FASD, they might help you.

Deep breathing

Music

Fiddling with things

Do more of that!

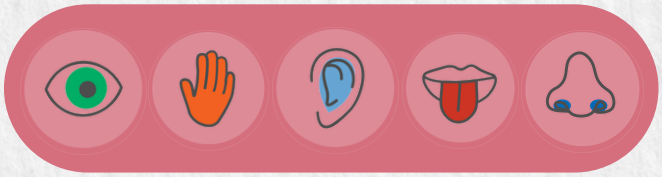
If you do more things that calm you, it might help you control your emotions and to think more clearly.

We have collected some ideas from people with FASD. Everyone is different. Some things might work for you and others might not.

You might have other things that help you.

Talk about this with your trusted adults.

Check out other strategies



Sensory strategies might help – here are some videos

FACT

When the brain of someone with FASD gets overwhelmed, they become 'dysregulated'.

The person needs to calm before they can think clearly again.

After you get the results

What happens if I have FASD?

Having FASD doesn't change who you are. You are still amazing. You're still you. But now you have more information and that information is power. You might also have some additional diagnoses. You can use this information to explain to family, friends, teachers, employers, and others to help them understand how to support you better.

Information is power.

What happens if I don't have FASD?

You are still the amazing you that you have always been. Now you have some extra information about yourself. The assessments include information and maybe other diagnoses that will help you work with your family, friends, teachers, employers, and others to help them understand how to support you better.

Live your best life

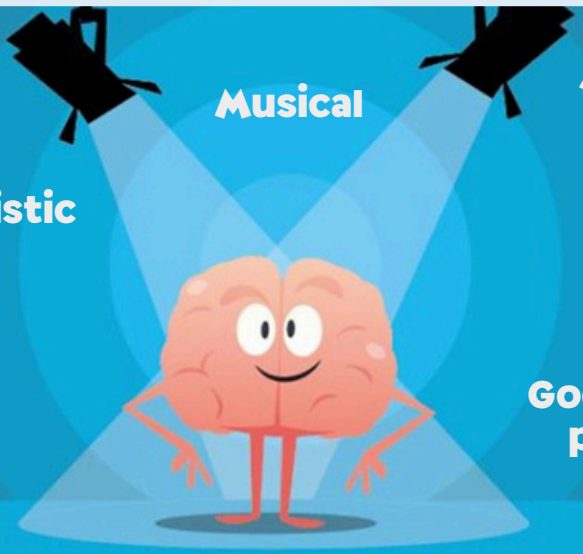
Celebrate your strengths! Every person has them.

These are your building blocks for a positive future.

Work with people who want to support you.

Remember!

People with FASD have lots of strengths



Friendly

Creative

Athletic

Able to 're-set' and start again

Artistic

Musical

Articulate – that means good at talking

Get on better with younger kids

Good at hands-on practical skills

If you do have FASD

Learn as much as you can about FASD and how it affects you.

Remember everyone with FASD is different.

You know you best.

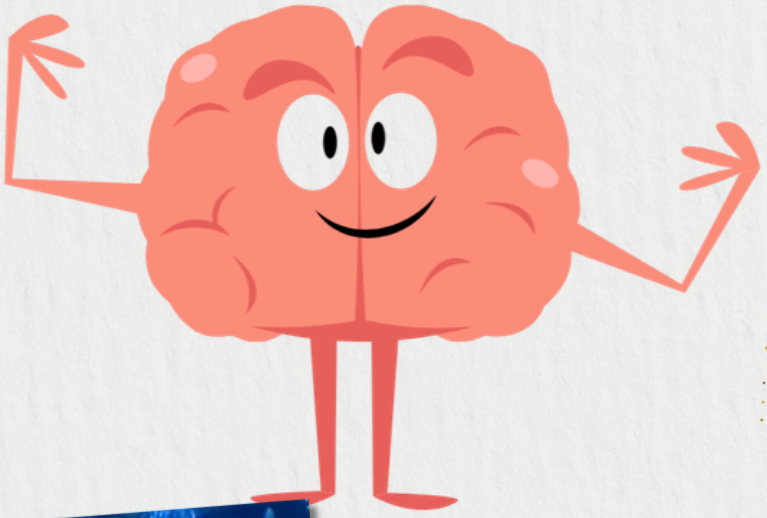
It's okay to have help

You have rights.

Know your rights.

Accept benefits and support that you deserve.

You are not alone!



FACT

FASD is a 'neurodevelopmental disability'.

People with FASD have a right to support and benefits. Some people wear a sunflower lanyard to show they have rights.

Check out Living FASD for positive stories about people with FASD

ME & MY FASD

Check out fasd.me

Greater Manchester FASD Network

https://gmfasdnetwork.info

FASD UK ALLIANCE

https://fasd-uk.net

NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR FASD

https://nationalfasd.org.uk