

Focus Test Report:

It's Never Too Late: NEW Ontario Alcohol and Pregnancy Awareness Materials and Strategies



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It's never too late to get the facts about alcohol and pregnancy

Enceinte?
Il n'est jamais trop tard pour en savoir plus sur les effets de l'alcool pendant la grossesse

1-877-327-4636 www.motherisk.org

FASD Stakeholders for Ontario



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Background:

In March 2008, the Prevention Working Group of FASD Stakeholders for Ontario released provincial awareness materials and strategies about alcohol and pregnancy. Alcohol use during pregnancy is a leading cause of birth defects and brain damage in children. The consequences last a lifetime.

These materials and strategies were designed primarily for women who drank alcohol before they knew they are pregnant. They share important information about safe levels of alcohol use, and where women can get helpful information.

This project was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, Ontario Region. The funding, plus a substantial commitment of time and expertise from the Working Group members, allowed the Prevention Working Group to design and test a range of awareness materials, make them available electronically and in print, and to make modest provincial media buys, including mall ads and interior bus, street car and subway ads. For more information about the resources and strategies, visit www.beststart.org.

Development Process:

The Prevention Working Group of FASD Stakeholders of Ontario started discussions around developing new alcohol and pregnancy materials and strategies in September 2007 and released the new materials in March 2008. The Prevention Working Group involves key staff from Motherisk, Mothercraft (Breaking the Cycle), Best Start Resource Centre, AWARE, Union of Ontario Indians, Porcupine Health Unit and Jane Hoy Initiatives. All of these individuals and organizations provided expert input and guided the development of these materials.

The Working Group started by discussing recent Ontario statistics about awareness levels related to alcohol use in pregnancy, and the provincial knowledge gaps. Next we came up with a very rough design concept as well as the slogan and key messages. A design firm was contracted to prepare several creative concepts in a poster format, and to make adjustments as needed according to feedback from the working group and focus testing. The design concepts were focus tested in February 2008 (see details in the next section) and refinements were made to the images and messages.

The text was sent to a translator for adaptation to French. The designer re-purposed the poster design concept into a range of formats including mall ads, transit ads, tear off pads, displays, bookmarks, static clings and camera ready ads. These materials are available in both French and English, either through a bilingual format, or separate French and English options.

The materials were refined through several drafts, based on input from the Working Group members, co-workers, and Public Health Agency of Canada staff.

Focus Testing:

The materials were focus tested in the communities of Kingston, Toronto, North Bay and Timmins. Focus group participants were presented with 4 design concepts. Their input was used to refine the images, tone, wording, colours and design of the materials. Focus group participants received an honorarium.

A total of 34 individuals participated in the focus testing, including women who were pregnant or new mothers, as well as one new father. Many participants disclosed that they had unexpected pregnancies and consumed alcohol before they knew they were pregnant. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 35. Participants represented a range of socio-economic situations, from women in vulnerable situations, to women with higher education and incomes. One focus group was specific to women of First Nation heritage.

Results of the Focus Groups:

Concepts:

As a result of the focus group input, the Main Concept (hand holding a pregnancy test) was selected as the foundation for the materials that are available electronically, in print, and in mall and transit ads across Ontario. There was sufficient interest in the Alternate Concept (a woman holding a pregnancy test) that the working group decided to make materials using this concept available electronically, for those who wished to print their own materials.



Main Concept



Alternate Concept

Focus Group Themes:

Input from the focus groups fell mainly in the following areas:

- Use vibrant colours and letters.
- Break the text up into bullets.
- Include humour.
- Clarify the type of services that are offered, that they are confidential and women won't be judged. There was concern about the potential stigma of calling substance use services and about the possibility of repercussions and being judged.
- Include a website, so women can look at the information about the service prior to calling.
- If using images of women, choose women who could be from a number of nationalities/ethnic groups.
- Include image of pregnancy test. Participants strongly identified with this image
- Include information for women who are not pregnant.
- Do not include a man in the image as, "not everyone has a guy who will be there for them." Also there was recognition of different types of families and relationships. A few respondents initially indicated a preference for images with a man in them. When asked to explain, they conceded that it didn't reflect their lives or experiences, but their fantasy of what they would like (i.e. to have a partner nearby when they discovered they were pregnant, or during their pregnancy).
- Don't use images that show a very strong negative reaction, as this does not portray pregnancy in a positive way (even if the pregnancy was unplanned).
- Reinforce that it is never too late to stop drinking.
- Combine both headers i.e. "It is never too late" and "Just found out you are pregnant". Clarify what "it is never too late" is referring to.
- Show the phone number in numbers, not the letter version.
- Use images with no people in them (i.e. just the hand holding the pregnancy tester). The concepts that showed a person often elicited the response "that is not about me."
- Text needs to be supportive, recognising the stress, guilt and concern that may come from an unplanned pregnancy and associated alcohol use.

Comprehension of the Message:

Focus group participants clearly understood that the messages were around getting help if you drank alcohol during your pregnancy.