

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, learning coaches and teacher leaders or as a self-paced study.

## ***Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Brain*** Module One: Part C



This guide is intended to facilitate conversation after viewing the video clip [Module One: Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Brain](#) (3:55 – 7:50 minutes)

### **General synopsis**

Module One: *Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Brain* covers three key points: A) Alcohol is a teratogen, B) Brain growth during pregnancy occurs from bottom to top, and C) During pregnancy, brain growth is impacted by alcohol.

### **Key point C:**

#### **During Pregnancy, Brain Growth is Impacted by Alcohol**

- Some areas of brain function are more vulnerable than others to the impact of alcohol exposure during pregnancy.
- For individuals with FASD, basic functions (e.g., heart beat, breathing) and those related to fight, flight and sexual reproduction may be intact; however, the higher functions that manage the limbic system are often affected (e.g., memory, planning, and judgment).
- Individuals with FASD are easily triggered to respond by fighting or running away. They often misinterpret situations as threatening and this can be a source of misunderstanding.
- Thinking of FASD as an injury to the brain requires us to change our perception of misbehaviour as intentional and requiring punishment.

### **Questions for reflection and discussion:**

- Thinking about your experiences with individuals with FASD, share a time when you have seen someone over-react, demonstrating a 'fight or flight response'.
- Can you explain this reaction based on what you have learned about the impact of alcohol on the developing brain?
- What might be some common challenges for people with FASD?

### **For more information:**

**The Canada FASD Research Network (CanFASD)** is a leading source for information related to FASD in Canada:  
<http://www.canfasd.ca/>

**Alberta FASD Home** (Alberta government):  
<http://fasd.alberta.ca/index.aspx>

**KNOWFASD** is a resource maintained by the University of Alberta: [www.knowfasd.ca](http://www.knowfasd.ca)

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