



FASD-CAN

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Care Action Network

FASD NEWS, APRIL 2026

Kia ora

Special update from the FASD-CAN Board.

Last month saw an inaugural event for FASD-CAN – the first time all our Board members and kaimahi / staff have come together in a kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) hui at Whatua Kaimarie Marae in Tāmaki Makaurau.



**FASD-CAN
HUI 2026**



The occasion was to discuss our organisation's response to te Tiriti (the Treaty of Waitangi), and to share our views on our current practices and future requirements.

We looked at how we can strengthen our commitment to te Tiriti in our day to day mahi, our resources, our strategy and our governance.

The Board met the following day to review what it means to be a Tiriti-aligned organisation and to consider what we had learned. We agreed that FASD-CAN is Treaty-aligned and that we will continue to strengthen our understanding and practice going forward.

Recognising the value of co-governance, we appointed Board member Darryl Roycroft (Ngā Puhi, Te Rarawa, Te Aupouri, Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa) as co-Chair. As a Board, we also recognise the importance that te ao Māori brings to Te Iho Tātai-o-Rongo / FASD, and the unique value of the lived experience (both whānau and professional) brought by those who whakapapa Māori.

The Board also noted the significant progress that FASD-CAN has achieved over the past 12 months – the organisation's growth, diversifying funding sources, extending our support for caregivers and people with FASD and consolidating and growing workforce training. The Board thanked Stephanie for her leadership, and our kaimahi for the knowledge, passion and compassion they bring to their mahi.

You will see from this jam-packed newsletter how busy our kaimahi continue to be to realise our commitment to support people impacted by FASD in Aotearoa.

Noho ora mai rā

Dr Leigh Henderson
FASD-CAN co-Chair

Meet THREE new FASD-CAN kaimahi / staff members!



Introducing Arlene Fyfe – our new Kaiwhakaterere / Navigator joining Anna Gundesen in Tāmaki Makaurau. Arlene has a fantastic multi-sector background in education, health and disability and has specialisations in early intervention and communication and behaviour.

[Learn more about Arlene here.](#)



Cassia is our new Tītoki Coordinator. She'll be our interface between rangatahi and whānau / caregivers, as well as with the regional Kaiwhakaterere / Navigators where possible. She will eventually take the majority share of [Tītoki](#) event planning as well as working with the team on the ongoing development of a framework and pathways for our this mahi.

[Learn more about Cassia here.](#)



Nikita Thomas is our new Training and Events Administrator who will be ensuring our webinars and courses run smoothly. This will involve technical support online or venues, logistics, travel and food for our in-person trainings, as well as handling all our training communications and supporting senior administration.

[Learn more about Nikita here.](#)

NEW 'He Ara Tika' Trainings 4-hour FASD 101 for community and caregivers

These are FREE, non-clinical workshops, aimed at community kaimahi / workers – youth workers, AOD counsellors, social workers etc – as well as caregivers and whānau. All workshops are four hours long with lunch included – 10am-2pm.

Some recent feedback:

"This training was very informative and well structured. It enhanced my understanding of how prenatal alcohol exposure can affect brain development, behaviour and daily functioning. The facilitators were awesome!"



We have been asked to offer three more sessions of this helpful workshop. If you can't make either of the in-person ones – please jump online in June!

[Click here](#) to register for our He Ara Tika training, **Kirikiroa, May 20**

[Click here](#) to register for our He Ara Tika training, **Whangārei, May 29**

[Click here](#) to register for our He Ara Tika training, **ONLINE, June 11**

New Private Facebook Group: FASD Caregivers in Justice



We have now set up an FASD support group specifically for discussion about supporting whānau with FASD through the justice system in Aotearoa.

Join us to share your experiences and advice – or just to feel the understanding and aroha from those who know what you're going through.

[Click here to head to the Facebook group.](#)

PS: Don't forget we also have private FASD Facebook groups for [parents and caregivers](#) and for [professionals](#).

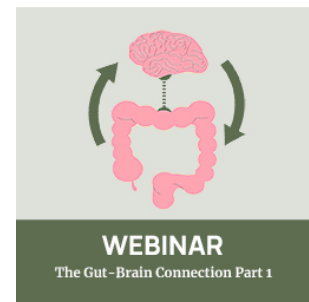
*** Please – remember to answer all our joining questions!**

June Webinar – The Gut / Brain Connection Part 1: Bowel Issues

Wednesday June 10, 7.30pm

Next to the brain, the bowel has the biggest effect on feelings, emotions and mental health – some professionals are even calling it 'the second brain'. If the bowel is not in good health, the brain is likely to be impacted and vice versa.

Tamariki and rangatahi with FASD or other neurodiversities often have food and anxiety issues which can cause gut problems. A recent study of health concerns in participants living with the effects of Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (PAE) showed 40% had bowel issues, particularly constipation. This can have a marked effect on behaviour and mental health.



Join the wonderful Lisa Smith, Continence Nurse, for this essential webinar.

** Part 2, later in the year, will focus on nutrition for neurodivergence.*

[Click here to find out more and register.](#)

Caregiver Training: He Maonga Āwhā | Finding the Calm in the Storm

Two-day workshop, 26/27 May 2026, Central Auckland

Are you a caregiver, family, or whānau member of a someone with FASD (or possible FASD) who is dealing with aggression or violence at home?

He Maonga Āwhā will give you a toolkit with five main pillars of understanding: brain-based understanding, trauma-informed care, connective parenting, non-violent resistance, and mātauranga Māori teaching for resilience.



PLEASE NOTE:

- To do this course **you must be currently experiencing CPVA (Child to Parent Violence)** in your home.
- You must have a basic understanding of FASD – it's not an introductory training.

For those outside the greater Auckland area, we have some limited funding to support caregivers with cost of two nights' accommodation and travel – please book asap!

[Click here to find out more](#) and fill in your expression of interest.

Life with FASD 2: Connection and Safety with Aroha

Mon/Tues May 11-12, Central Auckland

Have you done our 'Life with FASD 1' course? Are you ready to take the next step? We are now offering a two-day follow-on training to enable caregivers to take a deeper dive into the brain-based symptoms of FASD.

The training will be face-to-face in Auckland, for a strictly limited number of participants.

** For those outside the greater Auckland area, we have some funding for for travel and accommodation for up to eight caregivers – register early.*



[Don't delay – please click here](#) for more info and to register your interest.

Titoki 6 – it's a wrap!



March's [Titoki](#) event Camp 6 saw over 50 rangatahi, whānau and caregivers having a wonderful time once again at El Rancho on the Kapiti Coast. A stand-out activity of the weekend was bridge-building which involved much discussion, collaboration, courage and of course, hilarity.

Another popular activity was discussing the value and use of our FASD [wallet cards](#), which were such a success that one of our rangatahi was inspired to hand the info card out on the plane on her way home!

Thanks for the tautoko from these youth organisations who sent kaimahi to help and learn over the weekend: YCD (Youth and Cultural Development) in Ōtautahi, Tui Ora

in Taranaki, and Kick Back Make Change in Tāmaki Makaurau. And ngā mihi nui to Te Puna Oho Mauri Tapui in Ōtaki for sending two of their wonderful rongoa practitioners to provide hauora / wellbeing sessions.

A quote from one of our participants: "Even though I was shy, I'm happy I got to experience this camp with my new Tītoki whānau. FASD is real and I'm a proud FASD warrior! Thank you for everyone sharing their life stories, it's definitely amazing we all have super power... yay ... till next time whānau."

Photos and video of Tītoki 6 will be on our [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) pages on Friday 10 April – follow us to stay updated!

Online Caregiver Support Groups – upcoming dates

Our online caregiver support group welcomes everyone around the motu – whether you attend one of our [in-person support groups](#) near you or not.

Caring for a person with FASD can be very stressful – and it can also be enormously isolating. But when you join a caregiver support group, you're not alone – you're with people who get you! Groups give you a place to connect, be supported (both emotionally and practically) and be heard.

[Online Caregiver Support Group LUNCHTIME](#) – (monthly) Thursday April 9, 12:30pm

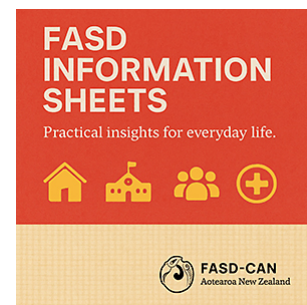
[Online Caregiver Support Group EVENING](#) – (monthly) Tuesday April 21, 7:30pm

NEW info sheets for April!

Each month during 2026, we're aiming to bring you a few new info sheets on a subject we know you'll be interested in. Most have a handy, two-page downloadable / printable info sheet as well as an extended version for a deeper dive.

We've now added **FASD and the Justice System**, and **FASD and Sensing Temperature Differently**.

[Check them out](#) on our Resources page (also via our 'Understanding FASD' page).



Pizza Clubs around the motu

These get-togethers are aimed at fostering connection and fun for both rangatahi with FASD and their caregivers – and they're doing a great job! Our dedicated volunteer organisers would love to see you at these events.

Pōneke / Wellington – Saturday 18 April, 6pm at St Peters on Willis.

[Click here for more details](#) and RSVP to Stephanie on 021 091 04421.



Ōtautahi / Christchurch – Friday 17 April, 6pm at YCD,
201 Cashel Street.

[Click here for more details](#) and RSVP to
gythlian@gmail.com

*NOTE: Please RSVP as soon as you can for these events
– preferably by the end of this week!*

What's the cost of FASD?

Our friends Dr Joanna Chu and her team at the University of Auckland are working with the University of Otago to research the costs of caring for someone with FASD. It's not just the financial costs, but the mental and social costs as well. FASD-CAN supports this very important mahi which will increase understanding of the burden experienced by caregivers and whānau.



FASD-CAN warmly encourage our members to take the survey. It will take about 30-40 minutes of your time – and is crucial to inform policy considerations in the future.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

Finally, but importantly...

New 'Request for Support' Form



With our increased team of FASD Kaiwhakatere / Navigators across the motu, we have designed a 'Request for Support' form. This will help us to connect you to the right person and ensure continued support where necessary.

The form can be filled out by people with FASD, their parents, caregivers or whānau, or by community kaimahi on behalf of clients.

You can access it, along with our general enquiry form, via our 'Contact Us' link at the bottom of every page of our website.

[Click here to access our Request for Support form directly.](#)

We are thinking of our members who will be feeling stressed about the next approaching weather system - kia kaha and stay safe.

Mauri ora
Your FASD-CAN Team

Stay in the know about FASD in Aotearoa. If you've been sent this email by someone else, please join us as a member to receive newsletters!

If you would like to donate to FASD-CAN, to help us in our mahi, [click here](#) to go to our donation page.

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