

Supports and services for adults with FASD

A Factsheet for Adults (No. 9)

Are there supports and services that are available to help me?

There are a number of supports and services that can assist a person to manage the impacts of FASD. Each person will have a different profile of strengths and weaknesses, so some supports may work better for some individuals, or at different times.

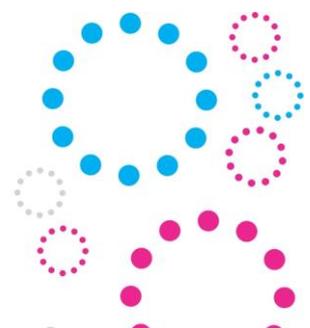
What supports are most suited to FASD?

Although there has not been a lot of evidence-based research conducted to determine what supports are most suited to adults with FASD, it is accepted that the cognitive and executive function impairments of FASD result in the individual requiring regular, structured assistance with planning, prioritising, decision making, resource finding as well as time and money management. Difficulties with executive function may also require assistance with making and attending appointments, cooking healthy meals and/or assessing and maintaining a healthy environment.

A person with FASD will need support to establish and maintain sustainable structures and routine, which are critical to positive outcomes throughout the lifespan. Difficulties with processing information and fatigue can impair decision making; and difficulties in understanding social cues can hinder and damage social interactions and relationships, leading to secondary psycho-social disability: indicating a poor fit between the person and their environment. The level of support a person requires will vary over the lifespan; however, the brain differences of FASD are permanent so some level of support may always be required.

FASD is a brain injury – it is ok to need help. As a guide to the supports you might need, it is important to remember that FASD is a physical brain-based disability, and although the difficulties of the condition are not within your control, they can be supported to help you lead a meaningful and more empowered life. This is the purpose of the NDIS. It is understood that a person with FASD will require support with a variety of issues including problem solving, emotional regulation, and social participation. Guidance to appropriate supports can be found in the daily tasks and activities you are expected to perform.

What is working? What isn't working? What can be done to help?



The list below is mostly from practice-based research and the lived experience of people with FASD.

What supports and services could help me?

Please see below a list of supports and services and how these may be helpful:

Support/Service	How it may help
Psychology, Counselling and Behaviour Support	Psychologists, Counsellors or Behaviour Support Practitioners can assist with behavioural and emotional regulation and communication. They can help if you feel depressed or anxious or would just like someone to talk to about your experiences.
Occupational Therapy	OT's support people to develop their fine and gross motor skills, cognitive skills, social skills as well as a person's independent living skills with the aim to increase success in their daily life. For most individuals with FASD, the goal is supported independence. OT's can help identify and develop the strategies, supports and structures to help a person maintain health and safety in the community. They also provide strategies and recommendations to assist with sensory and other processing issues.
Nutrition	A nutritionist may help with supportive strategies for healthy food intake and diversifying eating habits and can also work with an OT to recommend a food preparation service if necessary.
Personal Care Support	Individualised supports with a worker to help with self-care, food purchasing and preparation, support with medication, making medical and other appointments, scheduling, planning, prioritising, decision-making, household and living tasks and maintaining the home environment.
Community Participation and Education Support	Individualised supports including a worker to assist a person to engage and participate in the community and/or to identify and attend community and educational opportunities.
Animal-Assisted Therapy	This therapy involves using animals (mostly horses or dogs) to assist people to increase their social and emotional regulation skills.
Speech Therapy	Helps people to understand verbal and non-verbal communication and to develop more effective communication strategies. Individuals with FASD are often misunderstood and can often misunderstand. Identifying communication strength and weaknesses helps to understand, support and initiate successful communication.



Art Therapy	Can help build communication skills through creative expression, can help identify and develop process steps and visual cues for problem solving. Many individuals with FASD have creative aptitude which can be used in skill and strategy building. Art Therapy can be an excellent way to express feelings in a non-verbal way.
Physiotherapy	Physiotherapists provide treatment to enable people to achieve their own level of functional motor skills. Some individuals with FASD can live with significant skeletal and muscular pain and/or can process pain differently which can impact processing, emotional regulation, and/or mobility and may benefit from this support.
Community Activities and/or Hobbies	A person with FASD may need assistance to identify what their strengths are or what they would like to do. This support provides opportunities at home and away to explore and develop hobbies and areas of strength, gain confidence, and develop social skills with peers and in the community.
Health and Wellness Activities	Health and wellness services could include sports or attending a gym. A person with FASD may need assistance to attend and participate in physical activities. Due to brain differences the individual may significantly benefit from burning off physical energy to help emotional regulation and/or to help develop motor and spatial skills. The person may need support to choose an activity, sport, or exercise that they are interested in.
Transport	A person with FASD may have significant barriers and/or require safeguards around transport. This support helps to get to and from activities in the community safely.
Assistive Technology	A person may be eligible for support with assistive equipment such as a device to maintain communication with their health care professionals or other supports such as to help emotional regulation with noise cancelling headphones.
Supported Living	In some cases, a person may be eligible for independent supported living.
Dental Care	Dentists can provide essential care for teeth and gums which is important for overall mouth health, eating and verbal communication. Some individuals with FASD may have teeth and/or gum problems which can be helped through dental care.

Please note that these are some examples of supports and services and may not be funded by the NDIS. Your Coordinator (LAC) will work with you to determine supports and services that are tailored to your goals. NDIS supports are individualised, so providing as much information as possible about the impact of your disability and what happens when things go wrong helps to achieve the best outcomes.



Where can I find out more information about FASD?

NOFASD Australia is the National Peak Body for parents, carers and individuals impacted by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Founded in 1999 and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, we provide the essential bridge linking those with lived experience with researchers and clinicians.

NOFASD Australia provide a helpline for people impacted by FASD and those wanting information on how to support individuals with FASD. We also maintain an up-to-date comprehensive website with curated resources and links.

If you would like additional information about FASD or to read more about FASD and the NDIS, please visit the [NOFASD Australia website](#).

Sources:

Understanding the NDIS Booklet 2: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets>

How to review a planning decision: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/how-review-planning-decision>

