

FIRST AID FOR PARENTS/CARERS



This is a list of ideas for parents/carers to act as first aid for their health and wellbeing.

The first aid ideas have been split into three sections, with each section being a different stage of behaviours from the person living with FASD.

Some of the ideas will require preparation and research, but this is a great investment in administering your own first aid.

STAGE 1: *The management stage of caring for someone living with FASD, with strategies and supports in place. This stage is the foundation of parent/carer first aid as it builds and prepares the mind and body.*

Mindfulness. This can be self administered after learning the skills to perform mindfulness, or use an app that will guide you through a routine. Your own level of stress/anxiety will dictate which option is best. Some suggestions are:

- Smiling Mind app <http://smilingmind.com.au/>
- HCF Be Happier app <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/hcf-be-happier/id1107805827?mt=8>

Aromatherapy. Buy or borrow a book from the library to learn about the different aromas for health and wellbeing.

Exercise. A priority to support your body in times of stress. If you are unable to do this away from home, purchase a few items for your own home gym. An exercise mat, exercise bands and fitball are inexpensive items to create your own kit. Have several routines prepared, making sure that they are achievable with time. If your routine is too long and you are not able to complete it without it impacting upon the care you are providing, then it will not be successful and you will not be encouraged to continue long term. Other suggestions to aim for success are to perform three or four mini routines of five to 10 minutes during the day or to include the person you are caring for (only if this is likely to be successful).

Yoga. Incorporate into your exercise routine or perform mini yoga routines throughout the day. Strengthens and relaxes your body and mind. Some excellent routines of varying times can be found at:

- Asana Rebel <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/asana-rebel-yoga-and-fitness/id1067860796?mt=8> . There is a cost for this app, but is very user friendly and has a great variety.
- HCF Get Fitter <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/hcf-get-fitter/id1107805814?mt=8> . This has a yoga/pilates section with each routine about 30 minutes long.
- Borrow or buy some yoga books for a variety of routines also.

Interests. Regularly take part in hobbies or activities for enjoyment. Very important for building own self worth and creativity. See how you can make this work even for a few minutes to start.



Diet and Food. Diet meaning the type of food and drinks going into our body to ensure we stay as healthy as possible, due to the huge physical and mental demands on our bodies.

• Some great Australian resources are:

The Metabolic Clock <http://www.metabolicsclock.com/>

The Healthy Chef <https://www.thehealthychef.com/>

Music. Incorporate music into your day that is going to help calm and regulate your mind and body. This will be different for everybody. If this is difficult to do with others around, consider wearing some headphones with music playing, even for a few minutes a day.

Quiet time. Having some space in your day without input from anyone or anything helps to organise the brain and encourages slow breathing to reduce stress.

Reading. Immerse yourself into a different world with some reading time. This helps also to refresh our minds.

Research. Keep up to date with new information. This will help in development in a behavioural management plan, which is fluid. New information is being released constantly which can be difficult to manage, so at least scan information to read those most relevant.

Regular counselling. Search and search to find a suitable counsellor for yourself, even if it is just to "vent". It is hard to find someone with FASD experience, but if this can't be achieved, find someone who is willing to listen and learn about FASD so that they can help you most effectively. A counsellor can even be a regular longer session at your GP, a social worker or other FASD informed person.



Fun activities. To keep your relationship balanced, actively include fun activities that you can do together to build and support your relationship. These can be simple things like games (even short ones), reading together, exercising together...whatever will work for your situation.

Massage. It's only a small thing, but helps in the overall first aid.

Visuals. For when extreme behaviour occurs:

- Quotes
- Messages to yourself and from others (positive)
- Printed plans from other resources.

STAGE 2: *The “keeping it all together” stage, when behaviours are beginning to escalate. This stage of the first aid helps your mind and body to stay as strong and healthy as possible.*



Regular exercise.

This can be done by yourself (if possible) or with your person you are caring for.

- Brisk walk
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Swinging on a swing
- Fitball exercises

(I don't recommend exercises at this stage that would

involve items such as skipping ropes or exercise bands (therabands may be ok), as they could become harmful.)

Herbal tea. There are SO many on the market, but not all will be something that will help you relax. Do some research and try a few different ones to find options that will help you to relax.

Aromatherapy. After doing your research as suggested in Stage 1, put on a diffuser with an appropriate oil.

- I don't recommend candles due to the possibility of them being knocked over



- Monitor if this is going to be a trigger and decide appropriately.

Calming. Try to diffuse situations by reading together a book of interest.

Mindfulness. Either visibly or unnoticeable. This may or may not be something you could do together.

Breathing exercises. There are several suggested breathing routines which you can follow to help calm your mind and body.

STAGE 3: *This is the stage when there has been no window of opportunity to regulate; all the management which has been effective during the day has now become ineffective; there has been an incident (which may have only been minor) which has resulted in a full on meltdown, which can present in many forms and intensity.*

Get somewhere safe. Have a prepared place you can retreat to and be able to lock the door.

Ensure your own and their security.

- Make sure that you can have a few minutes to re-group safely.
- Ensure as much as possible that they will be safe for those few minutes.
- They can't abscond from property
- No access to items which may harm

Natural stress relief remedies. A good option to begin with and have on hand.

- An example is *Rescue Remedy* <http://www.ausnaturalcare.com.au/bach-rescuer-remedy-20ml-spray>

Self massage. Particularly on temples is a first aid option

Wrap self in blanket. Gives a sense of security and comfort.

Visuals. Quotes. Messages to self and from others. Printed plans and procedures.

Phone. Or text (if safer) a friend or relative. Just hearing someone else's voice is reassuring and comforting.

Breathing exercises. At this stage, using a visual or an app is probably the best idea, because it's easier to follow visual instructions.

Squeezing. Use a stress ball or another object.

Comforters. Bobby the bear is an ideal comforter <https://bridestowelavender.com.au/shop/bobbie-the-bridestowe-lavender-heat-pack-bear/>

Alternatives. If you can't get away to a safe place, have some prepared ideas you could try. These ideas would be ones that are not a reward. Cycle through ideas, so help them be more effective:

- Ask a riddle
- Recite a poem
- Show a funny or interesting picture
- Do something completely crazy and out of character as a way of diversion.

