

IF SOMEONE WITH FASD IS READY TO BLAST OFF

Slow down

Back off

Get them to a calm space

Do not shout

Use few words

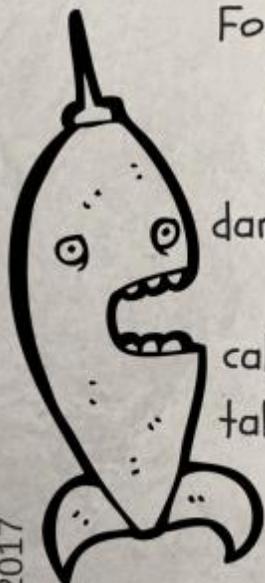
No "no-s"

Find a "yes"

Don't say "don't"

Safety for all

Wait to talk it out



For those with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), meltdowns are symptoms of unseen physical problems. When overwhelmed, their damaged brain structures activate the fight/flight part of the brain. The person must regain calm before the reasoning parts of the brain can take over again. It's biology, not rocket science..

Love & support them

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FASD MELTDOWNS

selected resources

UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S HAPPENING IS THE FIRST STEP

One of the more bewildering aspects of FASD is understanding meltdowns. These are not “tantrums” but they are the result of issues directly related to how a person with FASD’s brain is wired – it is helpful to remember these behaviours are symptoms of this “hidden” disability. Below are some top-picks for online resources and links to additional information. There is a lot out there on this topic, these are just a few suggestions. If you have serious concerns, please consult your doctors or those professionals who are supporting the person with FASD:

- **Sensory Meltdowns** – a paediatric occupational therapist offers insights into what these are and how to help: <http://asensorylife.com/sensory-meltdowns.html>
- **8 Reasons for #FASD Meltdowns**, by Savanna Pietrantonio. An adult with FASD explains what it feels like to have meltdowns and what helps her avoid them: <http://jodeekulp.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/8-reasons-for-fasd-meltdowns.html>
- **When I Realized Why My Son Melts Down at Home but Not at School**, by Michelle Myers. This post is about autism but it’s the same with FASD: <https://themighty.com/2015/10/delayed-effect-child-with-autism-melts-down-at-home-not-at-school/>
- **Handling Escalation: From Anger to Out-Of-Control**, by Oregon Behavior Consultation – a video with concrete suggestions how to handle the moment – “the only goal should be to de-escalate the person” – put all the action on yourself: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYoGX_Y6nF8
- **Diane Malbin** offers a different lens to see the behaviors of people with FASD, and describes how the brain structures influence behaviors, as does her book – Trying Differently, Not Harder. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBth4bGimOk>
- **Calming Down by Melting Cheese & Getting Outside**, a blog post about a variant of progressive muscle relaxation, a technique to help the body relax: <https://fasdlearningwithhope.wordpress.com/2016/08/30/calming/>
- **FASD Meltdowns, How you can unknowingly be making it worse**, by Lee Harvey Heath, an adult with FASD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrsyHC-FIRQ>
- **How to Teach Kids About the Brain: Laying Strong Foundations for Emotional Intelligence**, by Dr Hazel Harrison – this is a great visualization for kids – they often are confused by their reactions, this can help them understand what happens when they ‘flip their lid’: <http://www.heysigmund.com/how-to-teach-kids-about-the-brain-laying-strong-foundations-for-emotional-intelligence-by-dr-hazel-harrison/>
- **Amygdala – #FASD understanding at its source**, by Craig Peterson a parent (whose son with FASD recently met then-President Barack Obama as a result of work he does with Special Olympics!): <https://jodeekulp.wordpress.com/2015/11/19/amygdala-fasd-understanding-at-its-source-by-craig-peterson/>

- **A Special Place in the Brain for Swearing**, by Jim Kloet – Many people find it hard to deal with kids swearing as they become dysregulated – it can be helpful to remember this may be because the brain treats swear words differently: <https://helix.northwestern.edu/blog/2013/02/special-place-brain-swearing>
- **Rewiring the brains of children with fetal alcohol syndrome**, by Anne McIlroy, The Globe and Mail – There are various techniques that can help kids learn over time how to better control their impulses. This one is intriguing, it encourages kids to think of their brains and bodies as engines that can revved too fast: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/rewiring-the-brains-of-children-with-fetal-alcohol-syndrome/article1322351/>
- **Teens With FASD: What Makes Them Tick?** by Teresa Kellerman – the teenage years are often very hard especially with regard to meltdowns, we will revisit this in future posts. It is important to remember the same brain-based processes are happening in teens as in smaller kids – this piece reinforces the importance of teens understanding how their own brains are working: <http://come-over.to/FAS/TeensTick.htm>
- **Beyond the Behaviors of FASD: How My Dying Parents Showed Me How to Love My Son**, a blog post: <https://fasdlearningwithhope.wordpress.com/2015/10/17/beyond-the-behaviors-of-fasd-how-my-dying-parents-showed-me-how-to-love-my-son/>
- **For more information about brain-based strategies**, please see NOFAS-UK resources: tinyurl.com/NOFASUK-Brain

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

[FASD UK Facebook Support Group \(https://www.facebook.com/groups/FASDUK/\)](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FASDUK/) – this is our go-to place for online support. As a sister organisation of the [FASD UK Alliance](#), NOFAS-UK actively participates in this Facebook support group, which includes diverse input from birth parents, foster carers, adopters, extended families, adults with FASD, making it the most vibrant online FASD support community in the UK. (Please note, if you click to become a member, please check your ‘message requests’ in Facebook, an admin will contact you to confirm membership.)

LEARN FROM THOSE WHO LIVE IT

There is information here about adults and young adults with FASD who provide insights into living with FASD – this list includes just a few, there are many, many more amongst us, living lives of courage every day. They give voice to the younger kids who are unable to explain what it’s like for them. It’s critically important to remember adults with FASD also need continued support and understanding. The brain-based issues central to FASD are life-long:

<http://bit.ly/2k7Wcvx>

STAY TUNED

This is the second of a series of NOFAS-UK posts featuring available FASD resources. There are many, this is only the tip of the iceberg. We welcome your thoughts on any resources that have worked for you. Most of all, hang in there! Grab some earphones, and have a listen to some videos if you need a little get away. You can do this. (Every person with FASD is different. Consult your doctors and other professionals about these and other strategies.)

19 February 2017