

## **Substance Using Women with FASD and FASD Prevention**

**A project generously funded the Victoria Foundation's FASD Action Fund**

### **Project Team & Partners**

*The Principal Researcher for this study is Dr. Deborah Rutman. Project partners: BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, the Aurora Centre, Inter Tribal Health Association, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Victoria FASD Community Circle, Canadian National Coalition of Experiential Women, and PEERS Victoria.*

### **Project Background and Rationale**

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is an invisible and lifelong disability, and while its manifestations are varied, they include a range of physiological, cognitive, behavioural and social effects.

Research and practice wisdom tells us that women who themselves have FASD are at high risk of having concurrent substance use and mental health problems, and of having a baby with FASD. Despite this, there is a dearth of published information that has focused on the support needs of women with FASD who have substance use problems, or on effective practice in providing substance use treatment and care for women with FASD. Finding respectful, compassionate, and evidence-based ways to better support women with FASD and addictions and/or other concurrent mental health problems is integral to improving women's health and preventing FASD.

### **Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to consolidate and expand knowledge regarding promising substance use treatment approaches and resources for women living with FASD.

### **Project Components**

- A review of literature and practice knowledge regarding promising substance use treatment and care with women with FASD;
- an environmental scan to identify existing and innovative programs and approaches across British Columbia that are related to substance use treatment for women with FASD; and
- interviews with women living with FASD on their perspectives of their substance use within the context of other issues or challenges in their life—in particular, parenting and their involvement with the child welfare system, their perceived barriers to accessing treatment and care, and their perspectives on useful or promising approaches in relation to addictions/substance use treatment.

### **Project Reports**

Gelb, K. & Rutman, D. (2011). *A Literature Review on Promising Approaches in Substance Use Treatment and Care for Women with FASD*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.

Rutman, D. (2011). *Voices of Women with FASD: Promising Approaches in Substance Use Treatment and Care*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.

Rutman, D. (2011). *Service Providers' Perspectives on Promising Approaches in Substance Use Treatment and Care for Women with FASD*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.

### **For more information, please contact:**

Dr. Deborah Rutman

Ph: 250.721-8202 or 250.370.6087

drutman@uvic.ca