**Stigma:** a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something. The stigma surrounding addiction makes it hard for women to seek help, especially when pregnant.

The Circle of Hope is a safe place to share personal stories about their pregnancies and addiction.

In over twenty years of working on FASD prevention, I have never met a mom who INTENTIONALLY wanted to harm her unborn baby. Either she didn't know that alcohol was harmful during pregnancy or she needed help to stop drinking.”

- Kathy Mitchell

**STAMP OUT STIGMA**

I join NOFAS and pledge to **STAMP OUT STIGMA.**

Stop the blaming and shaming of women-

No mother intentionally harms her child.

Join the NOFAS Circle of Hope to STAMP OUT STIGMA Campaign!

FASD prevention is challenging! One of the greatest barriers we face is the STIGMA associated with FASD and drinking during pregnancy. There is a tendency to single out women and blame the birth mother of the child. The name of the condition suggests intentional harm by the mother, when in reality there are many reasons why women drink during pregnancy.

FASD prevention involves all of us to do our part. **Physicians** need to educate their patients about the dangers of alcohol use during pregnancy or at risk for pregnancy. **Healthcare providers** need to screen all women of childbearing ages for alcohol use and refer to treatment as needed. **Establishments** that sell alcohol need to inform people about the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy. **Spouses and partners** of pregnant women should stop drinking when planning a pregnancy and while pregnant to support them. **Educators** need to be teaching students about FASD. **Everyone** including family members, healthcare providers, religious organizations, health departments and communities should inform women about FASD and the risks of drinking while pregnant.

To join the Circle of Hope or to request more information, please contact Kathy Mitchell at the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome mitchell@nofas.org - (800)-66-NOFAS www.nofas.org
GET INVOLVED...WE NEED YOUR HELP!!
September, and more specifically September 9th are FASD Awareness Month and Day, both created to educate and raise awareness about FASD.

- Get free brochures and posters from NOFAS (nofas.org). Bring them to your doctors, schools and health clinics and ask them to talk to their patients and/or students about FASD.
- Order postcards from NOFAS. Mail them to your policy makers, state officials, schools, addiction treatment centers and ask them to help you to get the message out: there is no safe amount or kind of alcohol use during pregnancy.
- Go to the NOFAS FASD Month Webpage and choose an activity for the month or day. http://www.nofas.org/fasd-awareness-month/
- Take a selfie of yourself, friends, kids, etc. holding the STAMP out STIGMA statement and post it on your Facebook, the NOFAS FB and the Warrior Mom FB (private for birth moms only) the NOFAS website. “ I join NOFAS and pledge to STAMP OUT STIGMA. Stop the blaming and shaming of women-No mother intentionally harms her child.”

For the new reader: You are not alone. If you are a woman who used substances while pregnant, or who has a child with FASD contact the COH. We will connect you to a Warrior Mom; a mentor who has been down a similar path.

What is The Circle of Hope?
The Circle of Hope (COH) is a support group for women who have consumed alcohol during pregnancy and/or have a child or children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
The COH is here to provide you with:
- Referrals and resources
- Factual information about FASD and addiction
- Support for you and your family

Stigma and shame causes a rise in the number of FASD births. Blaming never helps—always hurts. The stigma of drinking during pregnancy prevents women from talking openly to their healthcare providers, increases incidence of relapse and ultimately results in higher levels of alcohol exposure. The stigma prevents women from asking for help and being honest with their children’s pediatrician and can prevent a correct diagnosis.

Let’s get busy to STAMP OUT STIGMA!
- Follow the NOFAS website and Facebook and join us for the STAMP OUT STIGMA Twitter Chat.
- Change your language as you write and talk about FASD. Use prenatal alcohol exposure rather than “maternal alcohol exposure” or “FASD occurs when a mother drinks.”
- Speak up when someone says something that is degrading to women, families or individuals with an FASD.
- Use first person language (child with an FASD NOT FASD kids)
- Don’t support legislation that seeks to incarcerate women.
- Do support any efforts that will increase addiction treatment for women and their children
- Join the Too Young to Drink international FASD awareness campaign. Go to tooyoungtodrink.org for more information.

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