Here at NOFAS, we celebrate all mothers this month. We commend every mom for her courage, motivation, and love.

We also believe that blaming and shaming of birth mothers is never a good thing, and that it does NOT help prevent FASD. In fact, this stigma placed on birth mothers is a major barrier to prevention. At NOFAS and COH, we are working to reduce this stigma and support birth mothers and families affected by FASD.

In our experience, we find that women do not drink to intentionally harm the baby. Instead, the woman almost always:
1) Suffers from the disease of alcoholism and can't stop alcohol use independently
OR
2) Is not aware that she is pregnant
OR
3) Is unaware or misinformed of the risks of drinking during pregnancy

What is 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

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.
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
1-(800)-66-NOFAS
https://www.nofas.org/circleofhope/

“There's no way to be a perfect mother, and a million ways to be a good one.” – Jill Churchill

My birth mom was an alcoholic. I was adopted because she couldn't take care of me. When I was young it was easy to blame her, but I don't feel that way now. I'm not angry and I don't blame her because of a birth mom's panel I saw to at an International Conference on FASD. I saw these women up on stage and they were talking about their own struggles and their own life, pain, and courage. I never got to meet my birth mom because she passed away of her disease, but these women represent who she was. I would like to say to any birth mom- If you're drinking and if you can't stop, there is help available and there are people out there. And it's okay. Don't listen to people who say that you have nothing to offer, and just keep going. Take it one day at a time.

- CJ, an adult with FASD

My mother drank during pregnancy. But just because she drank during pregnancy doesn't make her a bad person. There is a lot of misinformation out there; there is a lot of not understanding FASD. And there is a stigma placed on mothers, and when I go out and speak about fetal alcohol syndrome, I was always emphasize that when it comes to FASD, there are only victims, never perpetrators.

- Morgan, an adult with FASD

My mother means the world to me, literally. She understands me, 100%.

- Elizabeth, an adult with FASD

Thank you, Moms!