

HAVE YOU TALKED TO ... ABOUT YOUR FASD PROJECT

Authors: Freeman J¹, Walker N¹

¹Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

Introduction:

We know that:

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are characterised by lifelong brain damage from pre-natal alcohol exposure
- Some impairments such as impulsivity and inability to connect past experiences with present action are likely to have an impact on young people with FASD that can bring them into contact with the justice system
- Aboriginal people are over-represented in the WA justice system

Approach: The Telethon Kids Institute is offering all sentenced young people at Banksia Hill Detention Centre, the only centre in WA for detainees 10-17 years and 11 months, clinical assessment and diagnosis for FASD. Community engagement early in the project planning was through a formal Reference Group structure including a Steering Committee and Community Consultation Reference Group.

Key Findings: As the project moved from planning to implementation there was a call from Aboriginal community members for wider, more informal consultation. Personal referrals were the most valuable means of finding individuals and specific people in key organisations with an interest in the FASD project

Discussion: A major challenge for the project was the delay in the starting date due to lengthy approval processes from state government departments. The delay also meant that until we had approval we were unable to discuss the project with the community. A positive consequence of this extended timeframe was that community consultations had more time to reach more people in more networks.

Implications for Practice and Translation Research: Telethon Kids researchers acknowledge the value - through all stages of a research project - in talking and connecting with community members and organisations and looking for champions who can add their voices to promote the goals and outcomes of the project.

Disclosure Statement: This project is funded through the NHMRC. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.