

FARR

FOUNDATION FOR ALCOHOL RELATED RESEARCH

Report FAStrap© Course Colesberg: March 2011



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FOUNDATION FOR ALCOHOL RELATED RESEARCH



REPORT: COLESBERG FAStrap Course©

9 – 11 March 2011

Hantam Training Centre, Colesberg

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR) was invited by the Hantam Training Centre, via Rotary to present the above-mentioned course to participants residing in the Colesberg area. The course was sponsored by Rotary USA, via Ms Estelle Jacobs from the Hantam Training Centre.

As this initiative has the potential to evolve into a bigger and more comprehensive project, the CEO of FARR, Ms Leana Olivier, acted as course facilitator. The 4-week post course follow-up and evaluation was done by the FARR project manager in De Aar, Ms Lian Drotsky.

2. THE FOUNDATION FOR ALCOHOL RELATED RESEARCH (FARR)

FARR is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) which was established in 1997 (Reg: 1997/00190/08). The FARR Training Academy received accreditation from the Health and Welfare Seta in 2010 (Reg: HW591PA1010191). FARR is a registered service provider for the Department of Labour since 2008, providing support via the FARRCare Wellness Programme.

FARR initiated Alcohol Related Research (specifically Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders) in South Africa and has done all the South African based Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/FAS Prevalence Studies to date, namely five, with two more about to be published. FARR conducts comprehensive FASD and Substance Abuse Research and Prevention Programmes in various locations throughout SA and has successfully completed 21 projects to date. FARR is the only organization who has ever reported a reduction in a FASD community prevalence rate (article in the press and will most probably be published in an USA medical journal by mid-2011). All the projects conducted by FARR have the following comprehensive focus:

Foundation for Alcohol Related Research

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Directors: Prof DL Viljoen (Chairperson), Prof JP van Niekerk, Dr L. Bhengu, Mr AGP Botha, Ms A Sheik, Dr M Urban, Ms L Olivier



FARR has partnerships with various organizations such as the World Health Organization (FASD Task Group Member); UNICEF; Medical Research Council; CCSIR; NHLS; the Departments of Health, Social Development and Agriculture and at present 7 national and international universities. FARR has published more than 50 articles in peer journals.

3. THE FAStap COURSE

The 3 day course was developed to address basic life skills needs that FARR identified through years of research in rural areas of South Africa. In developing the course FARR consulted with government departments such as the Departments of Health, Social Development and Poverty Alleviation, Education, Agriculture, Economic Affairs and others to identify key aspects or problem areas that they would like to be addressed. The most vital challenges that will impact on the day to day lives of rural participants were included in the course.

Due to the low literacy level in rural South Africa, the course was developed for participants with a literacy level of 5 years of formal schooling. The facilitation is based on adult learning principles. Extensive use is made of cultural friendly educational games, interactive learning methods and story-telling, thereby drawing on the experiences of the participants and encouraging them to share their life experiences and to facilitate their learning and growth in a non-threatening way.

Participants are also capacitated to share the new knowledge with others. They enter into a contractual agreement with the course facilitator to distribute the information to 20 colleagues, friends and/or family members after the course. Participant's information retention and the commitment to the above-mentioned agreement are evaluated on the follow-up day 4 to 6 weeks after completion of the 3 day course. Certificates are only issued to those who have honoured this commitment.

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4. FOCUS ON FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS (FASD)

South Africa has the highest reported FASD prevalence in the world. De Aar is currently the town with the highest reported rate. De Aar is less than 200 km from Colesberg. Although De Aar has a higher unemployment and poverty rate than Colesberg there are many similarities between these two communities and the communities in the surrounding towns like Richmond, Hanover, Springfontein, etc. No FASD prevalence studies have been conducted in any of these communities, but the high level of alcohol consumption reported in these communities and the risk factors known to FARR, indicate that the FASD prevalence rates of these communities can be expected to be very high. It was therefore essential to include information regarding FASD and the prevention thereof in the training presented to the participants.

International FAS Prevalence FARR		
Country	FAS Prevalence per 1000	%
USA	1 - 3	0,1 - 0,3
France	1,2	0,1
Sweden	1,33	0,1
Certain sectors of American Indian Population	8	0,8
South Africa		
Wellington (2002)	88	8,8
De Aar (2002)	120	12
Upington (2003)	69	6,9
Johannesburg (2000)	27	2,7

5. FAStrap COURSE® MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 Mission

The 3-day FAStrap Course® introduces the participants to an interactive learning workshop where they will be comfortable to share their life experiences and gain new information pertaining to life-skills which they can incorporate in their daily living and share with others.

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5.2 Objectives

Some of the 17 objectives of the course are to:

1. develop a more positive opinion about themselves and their abilities (self-esteem);
2. be able to share the newly gained information with others;
3. describe 'good parenting' in their own words;
4. to define 'discipline' and to discuss to constructive ways to discipline a child;
5. critically discuss the term 'sensible drinking';
6. describe the concept of 'planning' and to apply it to decisions in their daily lives, e.g. planning the conception of a child;
7. discuss the dangers pertaining to alcohol consumption and abuse, especially pertaining to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; etc.

6. FAStap COURSE® FEEDBACK: 9 – 11 March 2011

The course was presented on 9 – 11 March 2011 in the Hantam Trust Training Centre in Colesberg.



Hantam Trust Training Centre



Training room before course 8 March

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6.1 Course participants

The course was attended by 29 participants from the surrounding towns Richmond, Colesberg, De Aar, Philippolis and Hanover. The participants' highest educational level varied from Grade 5 to Post-Graduate Education. There was also a huge difference between the socio-economic statuses of the participants. The group was therefore very diverse, which provided the scenario for an interesting course, taking into consideration that the course material targets people with an educational level of Grade 5 and lower!

(Attendance list – attached)



Participants registration 9 March



Hospitality students preparing for course

6.2 Course participants' expectation of the course

Before the course objectives were discussed the course participants were asked to state what they want to learn during the FAStrap Course®, the following is a summary of the responses:

What would you like to learn during the course?

Awareness and information about FAS	14
Any information about FAS that can help me to bring about change	1
Management of a person with FAS or a mother of a child	8
How to conduct Awareness Programmes in my community	9
How do I support a person with FAS	1
How do I know if my child or another child has FAS	1
How to help a 'Rape victim' (It was discussed with the group that this expectation falls outside of the scope of this particular course.)	1

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6.3 Educational material

Participants were provided with the following educational and supporting material:

- Participants' workbooks
- Crayons
- Pencils, rulers, erasers, sharpeners
- Material/equipment to support educational games and learning experiences, such as Balloons; Men's socks (ice-breaker and reminder about 'walking a mile in their shoes'); Various cards with questions; wine bottle; Name tags with names of imaginary characters

Supporting audio-visual material consisted of:

- Educational DVD focusing on the story of a family with a child with FASD;
- Flipchart
- Power Point presentation

6.4 Course content

The Afrikaans word 'trap' refers to:

- Steps that one takes (like climbing a flight of stairs); and/or
- Stepping onto something (like a cockroach) to kill it.



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The FAStap® course aims to take the participants through the following 4 steps in an attempt to provide them with basic information that they can share with others and which will enable them to combat the spread of FASD:

Step 1	Information about FASD	Learn about FASD, especially FAS. Sometimes participants hear about FASD (and FAS) for the first time
Step 2	Acknowledge the problem	Acknowledge that FASD is a problem in your own community and possibly in your own family
Step 3	Accept responsibility	Agree that it is YOUR responsibility to address this problem in YOUR life/community
Step 4	Take ACTION	Plan and execute steps to prevent the birth of more children with FASD in your family/community

During Step 4, participants enter into an agreement to share the newly obtained information with at least 20 family members, friends, colleagues and/or community members. Each participant must enter the names of these people on a register to be handed in on the follow-up day (in this case, 12 April 2011).

The rest of the course content includes essential information pertaining to other life skills with a focus on the empowerment of participants to enable them to make informed decisions about important aspects of their everyday lives.



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6.5 Comments and observations from course facilitator

At the onset of the course I was concerned about the huge difference in educational level between the course participants and the fact that the course material was developed for people with an educational level of Grade 5 or less. It is relatively easy for an experienced facilitator to adapt the course material during presentation, but with such a diverse group there was always the danger that a few participants might either find it too advanced or too simple. This problem was however bridged by making use of adult and experiential learning methods and the fact that the participants found the course content interesting and beneficial. The level of knowledge about FAS, especially FASD was extremely low, thus making this a 'new' learning area for all.

The socio-economic and cultural differences were advantages and added to the positive learning experience for all. It in fact enriched the course with many humorous incidents!

The participants were encouraged to be active role-players in the course. The interaction was facilitated by the educational games of which most, if not all, were new and therefore more exciting to the participants. The participation was very active and positive throughout the course with a strong emphasis on 'we want to learn to enrich ourselves and to help our communities'.

During the course knowledge, skills and attitudes were regularly monitored to ensure that the participants did indeed learn new information and skills and that they could retain this information and share it with others.



6.6 Comments from participants

At the end of the course the participants were asked to evaluate the course and to give feedback about ONE thing that made the biggest impression on them, some of these comments were: (Participants commented in English and Afrikaans. Afrikaans comments are translated for the sake of the report.)

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- 'I only realized the extent of the problem in my community during this course. I am absolutely shocked!' (4 similar comments)
- 'I did not know it is a life-long disability'
- 'I was shocked to realize that FAS is not only a problem in my community, but also in my immediate family.' (3 similar comments)
- 'Ignorance about all these things is a big problem and after this course I can help to give the correct information to people, also about FAS.'
- 'I did not know about the extent of the brain damage of a child with FAS.'
- 'I learned so much, I am so excited to share this with other people.'
- 'This course will help me to manage the problems and challenges of school children with FAS better' (2 Similar comments from two educators on course)
- 'Ignorance! Ignorance! Ignorance! Is a big problem. I can now help to address this'
- 'I will understand a person with FAS better' (3 similar comments)
- 'The DVD was stunning. I learnt a lot, also during the discussions following the DVD presentation.' (4 similar comments)
- 'The course brought me HOPE'
- 'The course taught me not to be so judgemental'
- 'The course helped me to accept the fact that we have a child with FAS and to cope with the humiliation.'
- 'I now understand how everything we learnt about during the course fit together to make important decisions in life and to prevent FAS.'
- 'We disrespect and waste our children' (Afrikaans: 'Ons mors met ons kinders')
- 'It is so important to provide a child with love and care'
- 'I never knew what binge drinking was and the dangers about it'
- 'I knew so little and learnt so much. I do not know where to start: Thank you!'



7. FOLLOW-UP SESSION: 12 April 2011

The follow-up session took place 4 weeks after the course and was facilitated by the FARR project manager in De Aar, Ms Lian Drotsky.

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27 participants attended the follow-up day of which 2 were representative of course participants who could not attend the follow-up session. Unfortunately no certificates could be issued to the participants who did not attend the follow-up day, nor to their representatives. (To obtain a certificate one has to complete the course, attend the follow-up day and submit the register of the 20 people who received a prevention or health promotion messages from each participant.)

During this session the participants knowledge, skills and attitudes were again evaluated. Ms Drotsky made the following comment: "Of all the FAStrap® Courses that I have evaluated thus far, this groups retention of knowledge and feedback was the best. I was really very impressed with the group and their enthusiasm,

Ms Estelle Jacobs and a representative of Rotary (USA) attended this session,

24 participants were issued with certificates (example of certificate attached). These certificates were posted to the participants.

8. THANK YOU

The Foundation for Alcohol Related Research would like to thank Rotary (USA), especially Mr Jonathan Warner, for the sponsorship to enable this training. The Hantam Trust and specifically Ms Estelle Jacobs and her team, are warmly thanked for the recruitment of the course participants, the venue, refreshments, meals and the never-ending logistical arrangements pertaining to the course, accommodation, follow-up, etc. It was a huge undertaking to get this group together and Ms Jacobs interest and enthusiasm in taking this process to the next level is highly recommended. "Champion processes often depends on champion people"



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9. A POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD

During my stay in Colesberg and after the course the following was discussed with Ms Jacobs to realise her dream of her proposed 'Phases 1 - 3':

Phase	Initiative	Proposal
Phase 1	FAStrap@ Course Completed and certificates issued Ms Jacobs appointed a coordinator per town who will do some follow-up with the course participants	Use coordinators and participants to 'advertise' Phases 2 + 3 and to recruit participants Organize a follow-up in each of the towns before the end of 2011 <i>Action: Ms Jacobs</i>
Phase 2	<u>Universal awareness</u> Raise awareness in a wider group to spread the information in the community and to involve more opinion leaders <u>Selective awareness targeting at-risk communities</u>	FARR Industrial theatre production and workshop in at least two towns, e.g. Colesberg and Richmond, involve community members and leaders 2-day workshop (FARR Training Academy) to educators, social workers, professional nurses, religious leaders (course only for professional people) <i>Action: FARR to present Ms Jacobs with proposal</i>
Phase 3	<u>Indicated awareness targeting individuals at the highest risk of producing children with FASD, e.g. pregnant women</u>	FARR to assist with implementation of a prevention programme with pregnant women along the lines of the De Aar model <i>Action: FARR to present a sponsor with a project proposal</i>



LEANA OLIVIER
COURSE FACILITATOR

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