

Raja and Neil's FASD Book Club

Conversations About Alcohol Use In Pregnancy



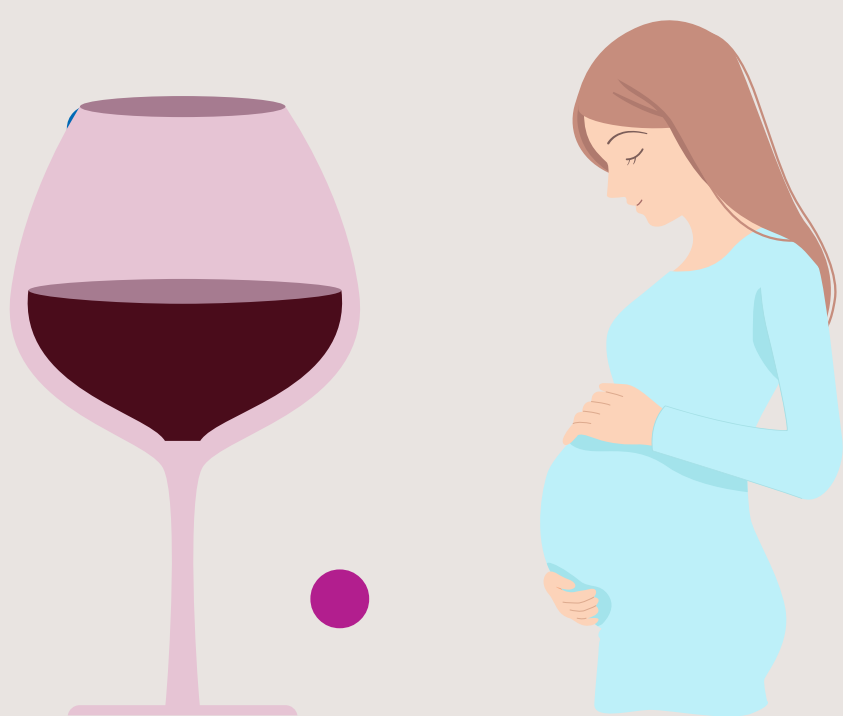
Anna Ferguson is a Specialist Midwife at University Hospitals Sussex, working with pregnant women and people who use drugs or alcohol.



In this session, she spoke about the conversations that midwives have with pregnant women and people about drinking alcohol during pregnancy.



Midwives talk with clients about why drinking alcohol while pregnant is harmful. Most pregnant women and people they talk to will stop drinking alcohol.



Some will carry on drinking alcohol when pregnant, even after being told the risks.

The role of midwives in FASD prevention



Midwives play a very important role in helping to prevent FASD.



They talk to pregnant women and people in a respectful and open way about their alcohol use during pregnancy.



This helps them make informed decisions about whether or not they drink alcohol while pregnant.

Behaviour change



The aim of midwives when they talk to pregnant women and people who may be drinking alcohol is to help them make changes to their behaviour.



They have to consider what helps people make changes to their behaviour.



This is because people don't always stop doing something just because they know it's dangerous.



Midwives need to be supportive and try to avoid making clients feel upset, or pressured, or judged.

Some women carry on drinking alcohol while pregnant



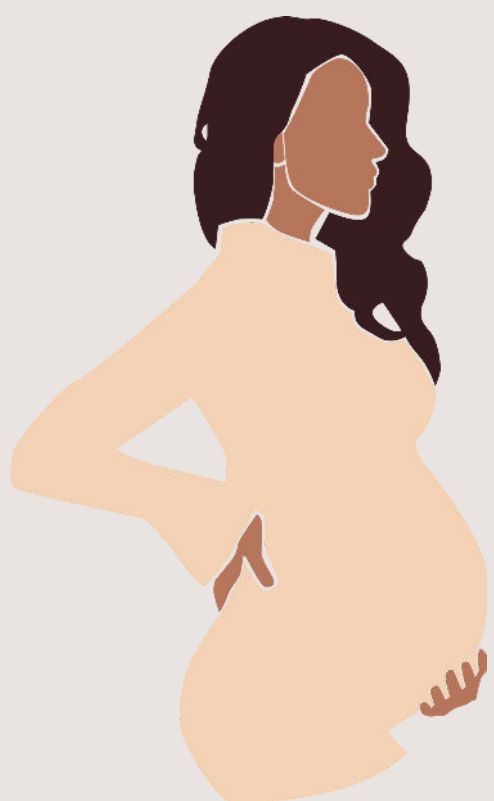
Even though most women and people stop drinking alcohol while pregnant after they learn the risks, some carry on. These clients fit into 3 broad categories:



1 - Some women are dependent on alcohol, and cannot stop drinking.



2 - Others continue to drink socially with friends.



3 - Some people still believe that drinking alcohol while pregnant is safe even though this goes against official guidance.

Talking to pregnant women about drinking alcohol



Midwives will try to speak to pregnant women and people about their drinking during pregnancy. One of these methods is called an Alcohol Brief Intervention (ABI). This is where they will tell the client about the risks. ABIs can be very effective.



Another method that midwives use is Motivational Interviewing.



Motivational Interviewing is where the midwife has a non-judgemental conversation with the client to try and understand when they drink alcohol, and why they might be continuing to drink during pregnancy.

The goal of Motivational Interviewing



The goal of Motivational Interviewing is to try and encourage the pregnant woman or person to create her own reasons not to drink, rather than just being told it's bad.



The focus is on asking non-judgemental questions that explore the client's knowledge and experiences.



These questions can be things like: "Can you tell me what you know about alcohol use in pregnancy?" or "What might be some of the benefits of stopping drinking, do you think?"



If the midwife needs to add some information, they might say something like "There is something I need to tell you here, is that OK?"

• 5 things midwives remember when talking to pregnant women

Midwives try to remember 5 things when they do ABIs or Motivational Interviewing:

1 - Collaboration: working with the pregnant woman or person

2 - Respect - making sure the client feels like they are not being talked down to

3 - Active listening - listening to what the client is saying and building on their experiences

4 - Nurture the conversation - helping to keep the conversation going, so they know that they can always get more information and support

5 - Ask again - give more than one chance to talk and learn



What is Raja & Neil's FASD Bookclub?



Prof Raja Mukherjee and Dr Neil Aiton wrote a book for other doctors about FASD. But they hope more people can access the information.



In this online book club people who wrote chapters give 15- minute talks about what they wrote and then they answer questions.



After each book club, the talks are shared on National FASD's YouTube channel.



You don't have to read the book. It's expensive because it's for libraries and universities. But if you want to order it, it's here:

<https://tinyurl.com/RajaAndNeilFASDBook>