



Dr. Alan Fruzzetti is familiar to many of us as one of the co-creators of Family Connections (FC), together with Dr. Perry Hoffman who sadly passed away in 2019. [This year marks twenty years](#) since the first Family Connections group was offered in 2002, and since then it has helped many thousands of families around the world, and continues to grow.

Lynn Courey and Mike Menu, Sashbear's co-founders, first met Alan in 2011 when he was in Toronto to provide a Family Connections Leader training at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH). Since then, Sashbear has developed a close relationship with Alan. As an organization and as individuals, we have benefited from Alan's incredible commitment to families. Sashbear emerged as the organization to expand Family Connections™ across Canada, and we are proud to provide the most FC groups per capita in the world.



While Alan is [renowned within the academic community](#) for his teaching and research, many people are not aware that he also volunteers his time generously to share his wisdom and expertise with organizations around the world whose work helps families impacted by BPD and emotion dysregulation, like Sashbear. Everything that Alan does for Family Connections™ is done on his own time.

Alan returned to Toronto in 2015 at Sashbear's request, to provide another in-person training for new Family Connections™ leaders. Many of the family members who attended that event are still active with Sashbear, volunteering as Family Connections group co-facilitators. This is when the famous "Alan and Emily" role-play video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THWnn-A7MmU>) was filmed, showcasing his masterful use of DBT skills to avoid polarizing a typical father-daughter scene. Anyone who has attended Family Connections with Sashbear is familiar with this video clip which inspires us to keep practicing our skills – we may never approach Alan's ease (he is an expert in this stuff, after all) but he makes us believe it is possible and reminds us how important it is.



Alan has also provided his insight in many other presentations for Sashbear:

- Explaining the five areas of dysregulation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THWnn-A7MmU>)
- Helping us understand how we are impacted by stigma about mental illness, and what we can do to reduce it (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOWsbgmZ0xE>)
- Skills for coping with unexpected loss and grief (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEAMMjwfbKs>)
- DBT skills for families (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4hD8qzFyok>)



Alan adds a quirky sense of humour and an incredibly calm demeanour to everything he does, making everyone around him feel at ease. In October, he surprised us with a weekend visit to Toronto on his way to a clinical training event. Alan and his wife Armida (also a DBT clinician) led an impromptu workshop on a Sunday afternoon for a group of long-time Sashbear volunteers.

Sashbear is honoured to have such incredible support from Alan for the work that we do. As we continue to provide skills and hope for families, it is relationships such as these that make our work possible. Thank you, Alan, for sharing your time and expertise with Sashbear!