

**ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION
AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ASPIA**

*Mutual acknowledgement and understanding
of the Asperger marriage experience.*

August 2008 – NEWSLETTER

Our next regular support group meeting is
this coming Saturday August 2

Usual venue – College of Nursing, Burwood
14 Railway Parade, Burwood, 2nd floor, 2-5pm
\$5.00 non-members; \$2.00 members

Clinical Psychologist Dr Julie Peterson will bring a presentation
on “**Exploring the role punishment plays in close relationships**”.

This topic has relevance to Asperger couples and is based on Julie’s doctoral research findings.
Please join us for a great meeting.

ASPIA would like to congratulate Julie on becoming DR JULIE PETERSON

In our July meeting Psychologist Noël Boycott gave a presentation on Communication and Empathy which provoked much thought and discussion. Hand-outs were made available on Friendship Skills and a method of breathing to help combat anxiety called “4 Square Breathing”.
Please contact ASPIA if you would like copies.

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Other news and items ...

Members, if you haven’t renewed your membership yet, we hope you can very soon.

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ASPIA Lunch Club is going very well
TOMOYA RESTAURANT
119 Burwood Road Burwood

above the Avondale Hotel (opposite Hungry Jack’s)
From 12 noon – 2.00pm prior to ASPIA meeting
Great food and friendship

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Illawarra/Shoalhaven ASPIA Satellite Group

This group is going well and the next meeting is on 27 September in Berry
For details, please contact Sylvia on (02) 4295 7327
or email Eleanor Gittins on janetgittins@hotmail.com

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Canberra Partner Support Group

Several have expressed interest in a Canberra support group,
so plans will be underway soon for a first meeting.
If anyone else is interested please let me know via the ASPIA email address: info@aspia.org.au .

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ASPIA INC (Asperger Syndrome Partner Information Australia Incorporated)
Providing information, contacts and support for partners (and family members) of adults with Asperger's Syndrome
PO Box 57 Macarthur Square LPO, MACARTHUR NSW 2560 (Aus)
Enquiries: Carol Grigg 0408 817 828
Visit our website for more information and useful links
www.aspia.org.au
info@aspia.org.au

ASPIA meetings to note

Psychologist Eleanor Gittins – 4 October 2008

Planned topic is “The Physiological Processing of Asperger’s Syndrome”
AGM – November meeting

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Additional Thoughts ...

At our last meeting I deliberately took down a few notes thinking I could pass on some gems in the Newsletter. Now I can’t get the gist of what my notes mean, so I think I’m out of practise at note taking! (You are welcome to request copies of the hand-outs.)

What I did write down is that “**Change takes Time**”.

Most of the phone calls and emails I receive are from new contacts who have just discovered that Asperger’s Syndrome could be what is affecting their situation.

Their search has become one of desperation as their emotional and physical reserves are near depletion and they are losing hope for the relationship, and in some cases, the whole family.

The discovery of Asperger’s Syndrome can be an exciting relief, bringing renewed hope and some renewed energy ... for a while ... until we realise that there is no magic wand.

This part of the journey can be very dark, and it is usual to feel like everything we ever knew has been tossed upside-down and we don’t know which way is upright anymore. The discovery of Asperger’s Syndrome requires that we re-think the way we view everything and the way we approach everything within our relationship and family. On top of the immense effort that has already been channelled into surviving the situation and searching for an answer, this can seem beyond overwhelming.

It is at this point we need to be merciful towards ourselves and allow for a process to take place over time.

With the search over, it is important to take time to learn more about Asperger’s Syndrome and understand where the behaviours are coming from. Time gives you an opportunity to seek professional help for information and guidance. Time provides an opportunity for you to experience the validation that a peer support group like ASPIA can provide. Time will allow you to begin the process of healing and recovery for yourself. Time gives you a chance to think everything through carefully before you make an attempt to introduce the possibility of AS to your partner, family or friends if and when the time is finally right. Time gives you an opportunity to reflect and to forgive yourself, releasing all the guilt you feel from not knowing and understanding it was a disorder. You did the best you could with what you knew. With time you will find you can let your partner off the hook for some things, and you will develop the wisdom you need in order to know what behaviours and characteristics are harmful to yourself and the family and that need addressing.

For the partners who’ve acknowledged they may have Asperger’s Syndrome, change will still take time, sometimes a long time. People with AS have difficulty with change and adaptability at the best of times, so presenting to them that they’ve got it “wrong” could be enough to cause a shut down or a melt down, and could explain a lot of the denial and hostility we experience from them. Professional guidance and supervision of this process is seriously recommended. An adult with Asperger’s Syndrome won’t know how or what to change. They won’t have a Plan B or an alternative way of doing daily life. Some non-AS partners have observed that as they themselves calmed down and began to quietly change their own expectations and behaviours, their partners with AS began to move towards them and develop curiosity about what was going on. This is the kind of opportunity we all pray for – let’s keep praying! Carol Grigg