

**ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION
AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ASPIA**

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

June 2008 – NEWSLETTER

Greetings from ASPIA !

Our next regular support group meeting is
this coming Saturday June 7
Usual venue – College of Nursing, Burwood
14 Railway Parade, Burwood, 2nd floor, 2-5pm
\$2.00 Members; \$5.00 Non-Members

This meeting marks our 5th Anniversary as a group!

Please bring a plate of something to share and we'll celebrate together.

At this stage we are planning to enjoy another informal discussion like we've enjoyed so much at the last two meetings. (See "thoughts" on page 2)

Other News and Items . . .

May was Membership Month – Please consider joining ASPIA, and if you are already a member, please renew your membership to help us keep up with the running costs. Benefits include discounts to meetings and workshops and, more recently, borrowing rights in our new library.

* * *

ASPIA Lunch Club

The Lunch Club has a new venue because the old venue has been closed for a couple of months. The new venue is a Japanese Restaurant with very delicious food! It is literally next-door to the old venue, upstairs in the Avondale Hotel.

Please join us for lunch before ASPIA meetings at

TOMOYA Bistro

119 Burwood Road, Burwood

The restaurant is easy to find. It is 15 metres from the entrance to Burwood Railway Station, upstairs in the Avondale Hotel and opposite Hungry Jacks. Enter from Burwood Road.

Come along at 12noon – 2pm on the first Saturday of every month (except January).

Arrive any time between 12noon and 2pm and enjoy the company. We will be at the back of the restaurant. Most meals \$10 - \$12. Coffee available.

The purpose of the Lunch Club is to foster friendship. All welcome.

* * *

ASPIA's July Meeting

We are very pleased to announce that Noël Boycott will be speaking for us on 5 July. Noël is a Psychologist who has worked a great deal with adolescents and adults with Asperger's Syndrome, teaching communication and social skills and more recently empathy. She has spoken to ASPIA previously on Communication and Asperger's Syndrome. This time Noël will speak again on communication and include some insights on empathy as well. Those who've heard Noël will be looking forward to seeing her again.

* * *

Other ASPIA speakers for 2008

We are also pleased to announce that Eleanor Gittins, Julie Peterson and Jeroen Decates have all accepted invitations to speak for ASPIA during the remainder of 2008.

We are just waiting to confirm dates.

* * *

ASPIA Satellite Group in Illawarra/Shoalhaven

The satellite group's first meeting went well, with 7 in attendance.

Congratulations to all involved!

ASPIA began with 6 or 7 five years ago when we were still called "GRASP". Good things are happening. The next meeting is planned for 19 July in the Berry region. Please contact Sylvia Wallyn-Cross on (02) 4295 7327 or Eleanor Gittins at janetgittins@hotmail.com.

* * *

Additional Thoughts . . .

One of ASPIA's primary aims is the **provision of information, validation and support** to partners struggling with confusion and frustration within a marriage affected by Asperger's Syndrome.

Another primary aim is to **help partners return to a place of emotional well-being** that so many have lost in the vortex of trying to understand and cope with an Asperger Marriage.

In order to try and source further helpful information I have been exploring some of the 12-Step recovery programmes to find some principles that could be adapted to our situations. We have looked at Al-Anon and CoDA more particularly and partners could certainly benefit from reading some of this material or attending meetings. There are a couple of other programmes I have been aware of that are not so readily available that are actually aimed at family members of someone struggling with a mental illness. Obviously this isn't quite a perfect fit for us either, but the principles are very relevant and I personally benefited from doing these two programmes myself back in about 2001 and 2002. The first one is based on a book called "Hidden Victims Hidden Healers" by Julie Tallard Johnson. It is "An eight-stage healing process for families and friends of the mentally ill." In our last meeting I read out the Eight Stages and I am hoping that in our meetings we can explore the steps in this book to help us in our own emotional healing. I thought I would reproduce the eight steps here in this newsletter for everyone to ponder. (Carol Grigg)

THE EIGHT STAGES

Stage 1: AWARENESS. I explore the ways in which the relationship/family has affected my life.

Stage 2: VALIDATION. I identify my feelings about this relationship and share those feelings with others.

Stage 3: ACCEPTANCE. I accept that I cannot control any other person's behaviour and that I am ultimately responsible only for my own emotional well-being.

Stage 4: CHALLENGE. I examine my expectations of myself and others and make a commitment to challenge any negative expectations (silent agreements).

Stage 5: RELEASING GUILT. I recognise mental illness as a "dis-ease" and release the attitude of blame.

Stage 6: FORGIVENESS. I forgive myself for any mistakes I have made. I forgive and release those who have harmed me.

Stage 7: SELF-ESTEEM. I return the focus of my life to myself by appreciating my own worth, despite what may be going on around me.

Stage 8: GROWTH. I reaffirm my accomplishments and set daily, monthly and yearly goals.

* * *

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