

ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION AUSTRALIA (ASPIA) INCORPORATED

(Formerly **GRASP** Partner/Spouse Support Group)

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

NEWSLETTER – December 2009



MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE !

Our next ASPIA partner support group meeting will be this coming

Saturday 5 December, 2pm – 5pm

College of Nursing, 14 Railway Pde, Burwood, 2nd Floor
\$2 Members / \$5 Non-Members (covers room hire, etc)

Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates will be attending
and facilitating a general discussion time for non-AS partners

Bring your questions!

Please bring a plate of something to share for afternoon tea – Christmas focus

* *

ASPIA is a support group specifically focused on the support & recovery needs of the non-Asperger partner in a relationship. Please see page 2 of the Newsletter, and also our website for information about support groups specifically for adults with Asperger's Syndrome.

ASPIA Lunch Club dining together prior to ASPIA Meeting

Upstairs at the rear of the Avondale Hotel, Burwood Road, opposite Hungry Jacks, few paces from station.
Arrive any time between 12noon & 2pm. All welcome.

Book Recommendation

Another book that has been recommended to us by one of our readers is
"The Dance of Intimacy" by Harriet Lerner, published by Harper & Row (not AS specific).

ASPIA's list of self-care suggestions

Is available on our website at

<http://www.aspia.org.au/pdf/2009/ASPIASelf-CareSuggestions6June09.pdf>

Applications for Membership of ASPIA INC are invited from partners, ex-partners and others who identify as needing support, information and understanding from the non-Asperger perspective. This is not in any means to be seen as discriminatory, but focused on the needs of one group of people with a shared experience and who have no other safe or relevant place to discuss issues and gain insights (parents of adults with AS are also welcomed).

Membership is \$55.00 per person/family per year and entitles members to discounts, library borrowing rights and inclusion on a peer support contact list.

We appreciate your financial support, even if you can't attend meetings

ASPIA INC

ABN 30 583 771 917

PO Box 57 Macarthur Square LPO MACARTHUR NSW 2560

Web: www.aspia.org.au Email: info@aspia.org.au

Ph: 0432 507 828

Please remember that listings and advertisements on our website or in this newsletter do not automatically indicate our endorsement or promotion of the entire content or views held by these individuals or organisations. Listings are provided in good faith for the benefit of readers seeking constructive information and support for their personal or professional need.

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ASPIA Satellite Group (Partner support) in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven

This group meets in Berry, NSW.
Next meeting will be Saturday 20 February 2010, 2pm-5pm (\$5/\$2)
Contact Sylvia 4295 7327. Further 2010 dates to be advised.

Additional support through ASPIA

For anyone who is unable to get to a support group meeting, or who would like an opportunity for a personal "chat", we are now offering this additional service for a small fee.
Please visit the "contact us" page on our website for a description of this service, availability and fee.

Visit Liz Dore's website at <http://www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com>
for the Nov 2009 – Feb 2010 programme for her Friendship workshops for 16-25yr olds,

Support groups and resources for adults with Asperger's Syndrome

Please refer to items listed below or on our website at www.aspia.org.au

Support group for Adults with AS – Burwood, Sydney

Next meeting Saturday 12 December 2009, no meeting in January,
first meeting for 2010 on **Saturday 13 February**

Contact Eleanor Gittins on 0408 954 358 or email janetgittins@hotmail.com

Support Group for Adults with AS – Nowra area, NSW

No meeting in December or January, **next meeting Saturday 27 February 2010**
(thereafter on the last Saturday of every month) 10.30am Nowra Central Library.

Contact Eleanor Gittins on 0408 954 358 or email janetgittins@hotmail.com

Support group for Adults with AS – North Shore, Sydney

Visit website for announcements www.jdpsy.org

Or call Jeroen Decates on 0402 028 588

Aspect also has resources for adults: Email: infoline@autismspectrum.org.au or
Phone: 8977 8377. For regional callers: 1800 069 978

Other groups and workshops may also be available from time to time through
Julie Peterson, Noël Boycott or Liz Dore. See our website for contact details.

Partner Contacts in Canberra and Melbourne

Canberra: Phone Anita on 0434 165 604.

Melbourne: Visit forum at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/aspartnr/index.html> .

ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2010	
January 2 – NO MEETING	July 3
February 6	August 7
March 6	September 4
April 3 (Easter weekend)	October 2 – Tony Attwood
May 1	November 6
June 5 – ASPIA's 7 th Anniversary	December 4

Please pencil into your diaries that we have Tony Attwood booked to visit Sydney on Saturday 2 October 2010 (October long weekend) to speak on Women & Girls with Asperger's Syndrome.

All arrangements are **still TBA**.

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Remembering who we are . . .

When partners first make contact with ASPIA, either by attending a support group meeting or phoning me, they are usually in quite a state of distress.

Energy is gone, frustration is through the roof, hope is in tatters, tears flow unchecked.

Amongst many sentiments, almost every partner expresses great sadness at the realisation they are no longer the person they used to be. The change that causes the most concern is anger. Most partners did not start out as angry people.

Most partners are, or were, quite calm, patient and caring individuals. It is very distressing to wake up one day and recognise the change, feeling powerless to dissipate or contain one's anger while personal circumstances remain unchanged and, for many, intolerable due to unresolved conflict, constant miscommunication and much anxiety.

Anger drives us to behave in ways we are later ashamed of, and guilt makes us feel even worse. Being in this state is agonising.

By the time we have reached the point of no longer feeling like the person we once were, we need help for ourselves. It will be virtually impossible to remain objective within a couple counselling context, unless and until we have had an opportunity to de-brief our own stuff, and find some clarity in the fog.

This is why ASPIA pushes the idea of self-care so strongly. If we've lost who we are, we need to find ourselves again. Attending a support group or meeting with others is very important and life changing, but we mustn't underestimate or play down the importance and value of having personal counselling for ourselves, particularly around issues of loss and grief.

Partners need to focus first on finding a pathway back to who they were. Only from that place will we be able to be true to ourselves once again and find the calmness, strength and courage to make decisions and constructive contributions to ours and our family's futures. ... Carol



Merry Christmas everyone, and a Happy New Year for 2010!

Mutual thoughts of support towards each other will be flowing I'm sure, as holiday seasons can often present challenges that need additional strength and hope to get through.

ASPIA's next Newsletter is planned for late January, and we have tentatively arranged with Julie Peterson to attend our February meeting to help us get the year underway. See you then!

God bless! Sincerely, Carol Grigg

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