

**ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION**  
**AUSTRALIA (ASPIA) INCORPORATED**  
(Formerly **GRASP** Partner/Spouse Support Group)

**ASPIA**

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

**NEWSLETTER – March 2009**

Our next ASPIA support group meeting will be this coming

**Saturday 7 March**, 2pm – 5pm

College of Nursing, 14 Railway Pde, Burwood, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

This meeting will be a quiet, informal chat over a cuppa for those who can't survive without a meeting! lol. We will be saving our energies for the following **Saturday 14 March** when **Tony Attwood & Isabelle Hénault** will be speaking for us at the Wesley Conference Centre on **Asperger's Syndrome in Couple Relationships**.

Partners, this is an event that will be suitable for your AS partner, as well as you. Hope to see you there. Registration is easy – online through the website; post form with a cheque/credit card details; fill out a form this Saturday or phone 0432 507 828.

**ASPIA Lunch Club dining together prior to ASPIA Meeting**

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

**\*URGENT\* Registrations are essential & must close this Saturday 7 March**

**Workshops co-presented by Tony Attwood & Isabelle Hénault - 13 & 14 March**

Wesley Conference Centre, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

Friday 13 March 2009 "Asperger's Syndrome in Adolescence & Beyond"

Saturday 14 March 2009 "Asperger's Syndrome in Couple Relationships"

Visit [www.aspia.org.au](http://www.aspia.org.au) or phone 0432 507 828 for more information.

**Lots of helpful hints & positive strategies will be shared**

**Please register and help support ASPIA in our ongoing support endeavours.**

**ASPIA Satellite Group in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven**

Will now meet on the third Saturday of every second month in Berry NSW. Next meeting will be Saturday 21 March 2009.  
2pm-5pm (\$5/\$2) Contact Sylvia 4295 7327 or email [janetgittins@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgittins@hotmail.com)

**Support Group for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome – Nowra area**

Meeting on the last Saturday of every month, 11.30am, Nowra Central Library.  
Next meeting Saturday 28 March.  
Contact Eleanor Gittins on 0408 954 358 or email [janetgittins@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgittins@hotmail.com)

The "Someone to turn to ..." volunteer peer support programme is holding a Fathers'/Grandfathers' Night on Wednesday 4 March, Club Burwood (not RSL), 9 Burwood Rd, Cnr George St. 7pm-9.15pm, arrive 6.15 for informal drinks/nibbles. Dr Tom Tutton speaking. Also, "Caring for Carers" Pampering Day, Campbelltown Catholic Club, Wednesday 18 March, Reservations essential. Contact Pauline 8977 8335 or Angela 8977 8348 for information about either event.

ASPIA INC

ABN 30 583 771 917

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Ph: 0432 507 828

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ASPIA Newsletter March 2009, Continued

**Attention Adults with AS:** Any adults who have a diagnosis of high-functioning Autism or Aspergers are invited to participate in an international research study aimed at developing an assessment tool for use with adults. The testing will be done at Aspect's central office in Frenchs Forest and will take about 2 hours. A payment of \$80 will be given to each participant to cover their time and travel costs. Contact Vicki Gibbs, Manager, Aspect's Diagnostic Assessment Service on 8977 8331.

**Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009 – APAC 09.** Website [www.apac09.org](http://www.apac09.org)  
This Conference will be held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Sydney, 20 – 22 August 2009. With its theme of Connecting Today: Inspiring Tomorrow, APAC 09 will bring together people with an autism spectrum disorder, families and carers, educators, researchers, service providers and practitioners from across Australia and the Asia Pacific region. It will inspire participants by providing opportunities to build relationships, explore intervention strategies, learn about new research developments and celebrate experiences and achievements and raise awareness about autism spectrum disorders in Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

### **Introduction to ASD & Mainstream School Strategies.**

Jane Cotter from ASPECT's Educational Outreach is holding a presentation on 6 March 2009 Burwood RSL. Phone 8868 8504  
Aimed at teachers but parents welcome.

### **Autism Behavioural Intervention NSW** is

providing a funded early intervention program called "Family Support Services" which provides 40 hours of in-home therapy for families with an ASD child under 6. An introduction for parents will be held on 18 & 20 April at Alexandria. Phone 9669 2250 or email [info@abinsw.org.au](mailto:info@abinsw.org.au) . (\$210 for intro day)

For those in **Canberra** who've been enquiring about local professionals and support, you can phone Shout on 6290 1984 during business hours or visit website at <http://www.assn.org.au:80/assn/professionals/index.html> for a list.

**Thoughts ...** A few months ago I mentioned I had secured an opportunity to speak with a representative of our Department of Community Services on the issues surrounding families affected by Asperger's Syndrome. I asked people on the list to provide me with some examples of experiences that I could include in my presentation. I am very glad to report that I actually had two opportunities to speak with two different women in management positions within the department. They were both very open and receptive to the things I shared, and responded with some very down-to-earth practical ideas. One of the key threads that emerged from these talks is that, whether our situation involves AS or not, if our children are being significantly impacted on by parenting difficulties or our marital issues and/or conflict, then we have a responsibility to our children to seek help from an organisation that offers parenting support, such as Relationships Australia or Centacare, etc. By doing this we are creating a professional record. If the matters are serious, we may also need to create a record of having sought legal advice. If you have serious issues, do not keep avoiding, thinking the troubles will go away, or that you can't prove AS. You may leave yourself and your children vulnerable to unjust intervention or defeat in Court further down the track unless you take some responsibility to consult with a professional now and create a record of what is happening. Don't try to prove Asperger's Syndrome, just present "what is", describe what is happening and the impact on your children, and demonstrate your co-operation with the guidance you are given. Carol Grigg.

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