

# **ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION AUSTRALIA (ASPIA) INCORPORATED**

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

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

## **NEWSLETTER – November 2009**

### **Our next ASPIA partner support group meeting will be this coming**

**Saturday 7 November, 2pm – 5pm**

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

\$2 Members / \$5 Non-Members (covers room hire, etc)

**Psychologist Eleanor Gittins** will be attending

and facilitating a general discussion time for non-AS partners

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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**

Recently a new ASPIA member recommended the following book:

**"Falling Apart: Avoiding, Coping with & Recovering from Stress Breakdown."**

By Sue Hosking.

This book was extremely helpful for this member in her own recovery from breakdown. Even though at the time of reading this book, she was not aware of Asperger's Syndrome or that this was what was having a significant affect on her marriage, this book still did help her immensely, and she still recommends it. I have ordered a copy from Amazon for our library, and it does seem to be difficult to get hold of. Worth looking for though, I think. Maybe local libraries could have a copy, or a second hand bookshop.

### **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 Satellite Group (Partner support) in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven**

Meets on the third Saturday of every second month in Berry NSW.

Next meeting will be Saturday 21 November 2009

2pm-5pm (\$5/\$2) Contact Sylvia 4295 7327 or email [janetgittins@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgittins@hotmail.com)

ASPIA INC

ABN 30 583 771 917

PO Box 57 Macarthur Square LPO MACARTHUR NSW 2560

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ASPIA Newsletter November 2009 Page 2

**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,

The "Someone to turn to" programme" run by Aspect holds regular get-togethers for **fathers and grandfathers** of children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.  
The next meeting will be held at Club Burwood, 97 Burwood Road, Burwood (Cnr George Street) on Tuesday 17 November, 6.15pm (informal drinks/eats) – 9.15pm.  
Topic "Family Life". Guest speaker is Robert Perrett, Counsellor.  
Enquiries: Pauline - 8977 8335 or Angela - 8977 8348.

**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](http://www.aspia.org.au)

**Support group for Adults with AS – Burwood, Sydney**

Next meeting Saturday 14 November 2009

Contact Eleanor Gittins on 0408 954 358 or email [janetgittins@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgittins@hotmail.com)

**Support Group for Adults with AS – Nowra area, NSW**

Meets on the last Saturday of every month, 10.30am Nowra Central Library.

Contact Eleanor Gittins on 0408 954 358 or email [janetgittins@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgittins@hotmail.com)

**Support group for Adults with AS – North Shore, Sydney**

Visit website for announcements [www.jdpsy.org](http://www.jdpsy.org)

Or call Jeroen Decates on 0402 028 588

Aspect also has resources for adults: Email: [infoline@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto: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**: We have a very brave lady by the name of Anita who would like to be a contact person for partners in Canberra. Her mobile phone number is 0434 165 604. I regularly have enquiries about partner support in Canberra, so it would be wonderful if a support base could be established there. Any Canberra people reading this, please let Anita know you are there.

**Melbourne**: There is a Melbourne-based online partner forum that presently just has 15 members but would like to grow. Occasionally, some of these partners do meet for coffee. Visit the forum at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/aspartnr/index.html> if you would like to become part of this little community.

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ASPIA Newsletter November 2009 Page 3

Thoughts ...

Many times in our support group meetings the matter of future expectations is raised. The anticipation of future "togetherness" with our partners is very important.

Many are still experiencing the "hard-work" years of parenting, and look forward with the hope that there will be increasing opportunities to enjoy marital companionship, soon. Others already have empty nests, are enjoying a renewed sense of freedom and the anticipation of retirement.

For all of us, this anticipation no longer seems as joyous as it once was. Hearts feel a bit heavy. Worry slightly furrows the brows of those who are slipping through the years towards retirement. Many feel that the years, rather than maintaining mutuality and shared interest, have uncovered difference and division, and, outside of shared ownership and responsibility, shared interests have evaporated away, or are buried so deep they seem unreachable.

It's hard to find the words to adequately describe this feeling, and the fear or grief that threatens to well up and overwhelm. There is no word to soothe this. The worry is real.

The only hope I can possibly raise is to remember that somewhere along the way, someone told us to try and go back and find what brought us together with our partners in the first place. That common interest or shared experience that our friendship developed around originally, when love began to spark. There is no easy suggestion as to how to do that. Re-discovering that shared interest could seem an elusive task to achieve, but may be the only way of simplifying life, and helping us discover what's really important to us. The practicalities and realities of surviving every day may seem to constantly strangle out any hope of re-discovering or enjoying those shared interests, but our thoughts can begin to explore the possibilities, and give us some hope, for today.

Recently, I've been made aware of some Couple Counselling material by a guy named John Gottman. I know very little about it, but I have begun to explore some of his concepts, which are quite interesting, particularly around predicting divorce. He says that the foundation of his approach to help a marriage survive and/or revive is to "strengthen the friendship that is at the heart of any marriage".

A thoughtful hope for weary hearts?

... Carol Grigg

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