

ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION AUSTRALIA (ASPIA) INCORPORATED

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

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

NEWSLETTER – October 2009

Our next ASPIA partner support group meeting will be this coming

Saturday 3 October, 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 and educational session** for non-AS partners

* *

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.

Don't forget to check out our new "ASPIA Advocacy Leaflet" on the website

http://www.aspia.org.au/pdf/2009/APAC_09_Poster_Improved_Awareness.pdf

The **extended version** at http://www.aspia.org.au/pdf/2009/ASPIA_Advocacy_Leaflet_Extended_Version.pdf
provides more comprehensive information about how AS can affect families

We are hoping that these two leaflets will be useful for advocating for ourselves and our families with health professionals and others who need to know what can happen when AS is undetected in a family situation, and where no supports are in place.

ASPIA's list of self-care suggestions

Is available on our website at

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

ASPIA is also building up a wonderful collection of books in our library

(Membership of ASPIA is required for borrowing books from our library)

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

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

Liz Dore will be running some workshops in November on Friendship & Dating Skills for 16-25yr olds, and has other workshops for teens and young adults planned for January 2010 and beyond

See Liz's website at : <http://www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com/>

Also, the Northern Sydney TAFE Institute, Learning Difficulties & Outreach are offering a Social & Communication Skills Course for Students with AS who are finishing school. Candidates are being interviewed next week on 6 & 7 October. Contact Simon Piggott.

Tel: (02) 9448 4431 (Ext: 26431) | Fax: (02) 9448 4475 | Mob: 0434 322 451

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.

Extra interesting reading:

<http://www.healthwelnessdigest.com/what-will-the-future-hold-for-patients-with-aspergers-syndrome/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/6219201/One-in-100-adults-have-autism-research.html>

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 14 November 2009

(no meeting in October)

Contact Eleanor Gittins on 0408 954 358 or email 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

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: info@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.

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Thoughts ...

In earlier Newsletters this year I have alluded to some controversies in the online forum communities of AS and NT people.

It has become necessary for us, as ASPIA, to recognise that we are no longer just a support group for partners and a website for information and contacts, but that our website is also seen by the wider communities as the representation of our group's attitudes towards those who are affected by Asperger's Syndrome.

The establishment of ASPIA was driven by a devastating dearth of information and support for those who, after many years and sometimes decades, "happened" on the realisation that Asperger's Syndrome could be the unidentified factor creating unexplained confusion and frustration in their relationship and influencing the steady and frightening erosion of what began as a solid and promising marriage.

Even if Asperger's Syndrome only affected communication between individuals in a relationship, communication in all its facets and complexities is the tool or key that enables us to successfully enter and share the world of another, mutually. This is what marriage is all about.

ASPIA has been dedicated to not only providing validation and support to non-AS partners, but to also providing education that enables growth of understanding. Among many things, understanding will hopefully lead to improved communication between partners, and an easing of the confusion, frustration and erosion that has been taking place in these relationships. The recent establishment of support groups for adults with AS is a promising new venture in the provision of education and support for individuals with AS who are in relationships.

Whilst we firmly believe that partners and families need information that clearly identifies and addresses the real issues in a relationship negatively affected by Asperger's Syndrome, we need to find balance in this. We recognise that to emphasise our own emotional damage in ways that personally denigrates our partners and places personal blame on them for all the relationship difficulties, we are inadvertently adding to further division in the relationship that will be counter-productive to what we really desire.

Upon discovery of AS, the tendency of the non-AS partner to blame the AS partner comes from a sense that they themselves have been shouldering an unfair load of blame for the relationship difficulties and it's hard not to want to point the finger back. When both partners come to an understanding of AS, the tendency to blame or retaliate diminishes.

ASPIA will continue to promote understanding, and believes that a supported partner can be the best ally an AS partner can have. However, ASPIA will also continue to emphasise that for couples, there is only so much influence that a supported partner can have within his or her relationship unless the partner with AS is also willing to participate in recognising the relationship difficulties being experienced and seeking mutually supportive solutions for the difficulties.

Our dream is that both partners can be mutual allies in re-building a relationship that works and creates emotional safety for both partners.

... Carol Grigg

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