

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

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

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

## **NEWSLETTER – April 2010**

### **ASPIA partner support group meeting will still be held this coming Saturday 3 April, 2pm – 5pm**

Even though it's the Easter long weekend  
College of Nursing, 14 Railway Pde, Burwood, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
\$2 Members / \$5 Non-Members (covers room hire, etc)

Meeting will just be an informal discussion

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.

### **\*Please Note a Change to Venue\* for the ASPIA Lunch Club Sapori Di Roma – Bar, Pizzeria, Restaurant**

117 Burwood Road, Burwood, next door to previous venue and opposite Hungry Jack's  
Arrive any time between 12noon & 2pm. All welcome.

### **Book Recommendations**

**"My Life with Aspergers"** by Australian Author Megan Hammond,  
New Holland Publishers.

#### **"Confessions of an Unashamed Asperger"**

By our Australian AS friend Ron Hedgcock

(wrote our articles on "A Compartment called Marriage" and "Confessions of a Borderline Aspie")

Currently available as an ebook

[http://chipmunkpublishing.co.uk/shop/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&products\\_id=1567](http://chipmunkpublishing.co.uk/shop/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=1567)

Ron has amazing insights into being an AS male – very worthwhile read

#### **"Life with a Partner or Spouse with Asperger Syndrome: Going over the Edge?"**

Practical Steps to Saving You and Your Relationship

By Kathy J Marshack, Autism Asperger Publishing Company

#### **"The Aardvark's Wife"**

An intimate view into the life and challenges of an Asperger Marriage

ByCarolynn Woods, Published by Woods Media

(these last two books are recommended by an ASPIA member)

### **ASPIA's list of self-care suggestions**

Is available on our website at

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

### **Online Australian Survey – Asperger's Syndrome in Parents and Couples**

The University of Queensland is looking for participants for an online survey.

It's on Asperger's Syndrome in Parenthood and Couplehood.

Please follow this link: <http://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/parentresearch>

ASPIA INC

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ASPIA Newsletter April 2010 Page 2

## **New Membership Year for ASPIA INC starting 1 May 2010 – please request an application form**

**Applications 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 at meetings & events, library borrowing rights and inclusion on a peer support contact list.

### **Facebook Page**

We are presently experimenting with a private Facebook page for members only, which opens up the scope for members to be able to connect with each other outside of meetings.

Those who are not in Sydney or can't get to meetings may like to consider this for finding others to talk to or meet.

:)

### **Follow the following link for a great article on Aspergers in Marriage**

<http://www.lhj.com/relationships/can-this-marriage-be-saved/unsolvable-conflicts/my-husband-has-aspergers>

(Make sure you view all 3 pages, labelled "Her Turn", "His Turn" and "The Counsellor's Turn".)

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

Meeting informally now, contact Sylvia 4295 7327

#### **New Partner groups/contacts**

**Gold Coast:** Phone Tricia on 0413 085 174

**Canberra:** Phone Anita on 0434 165 604.

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

**Adelaide:** Phone Heike Haffer on 0431 039 136, email [heikehaffer@hotmail.com](mailto:heikehaffer@hotmail.com)

(see ASPIA website for others)

### **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 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	December 4

### **2010 Special Events**

Saturday 26 June 2010

Workshop with **Julie Peterson** on **AS and Mood Management**

Information available soon

Saturday 2 October 2010 (October long weekend)

Workshop with **Tony Attwood** on **Women & Girls with Asperger's Syndrome.**

Information available soon

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ASPIA Newsletter April 2010 Page 3

## Support groups and resources for adults with Asperger's Syndrome

### Support Group for Adults with AS – Burwood, Sydney

Next Meeting on **Saturday 10 April** (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday every month)  
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

Next meeting **Saturday 24 April** (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

### \*New AS Social Group – Wollongong\*

First Wednesday of every month, 7.30pm – 9.30pm.  
Please contact Samantha at [asd.support@hotmail.com](mailto:asd.support@hotmail.com)

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

The waves in the ocean  
Are like my emotions  
They well and they swell in my mind  
But where's his emotion?  
It is just devotion  
That keeps us together I find

(Portion of a poem by Christine)

**Thoughts ...** When faced with a conflict situation, try to pause, think, and pull back. It is virtually a foregone conclusion that if we pursue our case at that point, the situation will almost certainly escalate and deteriorate into something that we cannot resolve and that will cause more stress and desperation for ourselves, as well as the other person.

When in conflict with someone with Asperger's Syndrome we need to fight back our natural inclination to produce more reasons and arguments and expand our case. We need to simplify rather than complicate. Narrow down rather than expand. Stick to the one point. Deal with one issue at a time. Stay calm, use logic, eliminate emotion or emotional responses. Pause and come back to it later if emotions begin to escalate. Pre-organise some signals and time frames with your partner for "time out". Yes, the frustration is high, and it feels once again like we are the one having to take responsibility for the hard work, but what's the point of beating your head against a brick wall? This only brings more pain and distress to yourself, and doesn't bring any solutions to the situation.

By escalating emotionally, expanding our argument and intensifying the situation, we are going to force the AS person into a "can't cope" and "can't comprehend" state. We will overwhelm them. Some of them will shut down at this point and disengage – which infuriates us further. Others will meltdown and become enraged, which isn't safe for anyone. They may just do whatever works to make us back off and shut up. No resolution, and no hope of resolution.

In time, once we've demonstrated a new and measured approach to conflict, our partners may stay engaged for longer and some discussion may be able to take place. While ever there's a threat of emotional escalation, the AS person is more than likely to run for cover, and we will be left with rage and frustration. Physically and emotionally this is terribly destructive for us and it is vitally important for our health and well-being to minimise these situations as much as possible. Choose your battles, and manage them safely, for your own sake as much as anyone's. Maybe get help, talk to a professional about specific strategies.

And don't forget that communicating via email can eliminate much of the "emotional atmosphere" that takes place around face to face discussion and arguments. People with AS have trouble processing words, meaning, facial expression, eye contact, body language, tone of voice, emotion – all at once. Cut down the channels. It's worth a try. (... Carol)

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