

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

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

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

NEWSLETTER – February 2010

Happy New Year !

Our next ASPIA partner support group meeting will be this coming

Saturday 6 February, 2pm – 5pm

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

Clinical Psychologist Julie Peterson

will be attending and presenting on:

Unpacking, Discerning and Understanding Autism and its 3 Kissing Cousins:

Anxiety, Attachment Disorder and ADHD

This presentation will be facilitated in a fun way by watching the movie
"Lars and The Real Girl".

* *

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 group members is
"The Dance of Anger" by Harriet Lerner, published by HarperCollins Publishers (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>

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>

Follow the following link for a great new article on Asperger's 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".)

**There is a fundraiser concert for Autism being held this Wednesday night 3 February
at the State Theatre – "Altered State – A concert for Autism"**

Tickets <http://www.ticketmaster.com.au/Altered-State-A-Concert-For-Autism-tickets/artist/1384323>

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

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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

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.

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

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

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: 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.

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

New Partner groups

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

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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Being “The Problem”

During my time away on the North Coast a couple of weeks ago I spent a week with a dear old family friend. This friend and I have had many D & M's over the years, and we usually end up on the topic of her parents. This friend has endured constant, inexplicable rejection and harassment from her parents, and sisters for her entire life. She is constantly agonizing over what she has done to deserve it ... if only she could work it out and make amends ... things could be resolved. But she hasn't a clue, and her parents just elude to things, and won't tell her what it is she's done wrong. The sense of guilt that plagues her has seriously affected her mental and emotional health, for many years now.

I was with this friend when she had one of those “aha” moments, when the pennies finally dropped and she realized that she is the problem, their problem ... but not because she's done anything wrong. She is just her. And for some reason this has never been ok for her parents.

The burden that slipped off her shoulders was actually visible and measurable for me looking on. The guilt had been false guilt. Her steps became lighter, her voice stronger, her face came alive, the light and joy returned to her eyes, and she is still basking in this realisation. She's ok with being “the problem” because she's ok with who she is. Plenty of other people in her life love and respect her and value her for who she is. That's not to say it isn't desperately painful to be rejected by those closest to us, but coming to a place of accepting and valuing ourselves, for who we are, whether we're a problem to others or not, is a great milestone to reach.

I couldn't help thinking how this same realisation has helped many of us who have partners who seem to see us as “the problem” in their lives. The truth is, we are! But not because we've done anything wrong. We are simply being who we are. We have genuine needs for communication, affection, warmth, care, spontaneity – all “normal” needs for ordinary folk.

Let's be ok with being “the problem”. It's surprisingly reassuring.

... Carol

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