

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

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

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

## **NEWSLETTER – November 2010**

Our meeting this coming Saturday 6 November will be at the usual time and place

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 our meeting  
to answer questions and facilitate a discussion time.

At each meeting during 2010 we have had about 3 or 4 new contacts attending. Most of these are at the beginning of their journey of understanding Asperger's Syndrome and of course have many questions that need realistic and practical answers. Those who attend regularly also have many questions as they continue to navigate daily life with an Asperger partner.

Eleanor has provided some crucial education for us in previous presentations that has helped us better understand the differences between the AS and NT minds that contribute to creating much of the bewilderment we experience in our relationships.

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 meeting before support group meeting 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.

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

**Available on our website at**

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

### **Other partner support groups/contacts in Australia**

**Brisbane:** Visit [www.aspiepartners.com](http://www.aspiepartners.com)

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

**Northern Rivers, NSW:** Phone Debbie on (02) 6676 0483, Email: [northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com)

**Central Coast, NSW:** possible informal group to start, contact ASPIA

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

**Perth:** Phone Roz on (08) 9284 5252, Email: [rozsdesk@iinet.net.au](mailto:rozsdesk@iinet.net.au)

**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)

**Albury, NSW:** Possibly starting in 2011, contact ASPIA

ASPIA INC

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<b>Remaining ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2010</b>	
November 6	December 4 – final for 2010
<b>ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2011</b>	
No Meeting in January	February 5
March 5	April 2
May 7	June 4
July 2	August 6
September 3	October 1
November 5	December 3

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

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

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 – North Shore, Sydney**

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

Or call Jeroen Decates on 0402 028 588

**AS Social Group "Social Steps" – Wollongong**

Now on the first and third Wednesday of every month, 6.00pm – 8.00pm

The Palm Court Hotel, Corrimal.

Please contact Samantha at [asd.support@hotmail.com](mailto:asd.support@hotmail.com)

**\*New\*** Brisbane – **AU-SOME Women and Girls' Group** – Saturday 27 November 2010, 11am – 4pm

Contact Camilla Connolly [camillaconnolly@optusnet.com.au](mailto:camillaconnolly@optusnet.com.au) or

Rachael Harris [Rachael.counsellor@gmail.com](mailto:Rachael.counsellor@gmail.com)

Aspect also has resources for adults: Email: [infoline@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:infoline@autismspectrum.org.au) or Phone: 8977 8377

Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality – Liz Dore, [www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com](http://www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com)

**ASPIA Workshop Review**

On Saturday 2 October ASPIA hosted the workshop on Girls and Women with Asperger's Syndrome in Campbelltown, with 220 people in attendance. Professor Tony Attwood was our primary Presenter and as usual his presentation was brim full of vital information and validation for all present. Two women with Asperger's Syndrome, Camilla Connolly and Megan Hammond also contributed to the presentation, making amazing connections with the audience and providing vital clues and suggestions for females with AS and their families.

For those of us from ASPIA who were in attendance to co-ordinate the day, once again we were excited and overwhelmed by the fulfilment of our hopes for the day. It brings great joy to see the difference this kind of event can achieve in people's lives by creating an opportunity for them to meet and identify with others who share similar experiences, and receive strategic information that will help make a difference in their daily lives. Feedback from this event has been truly heart-warming.

Latest website statistics for the ASPIA website show that on average during 2010 there have been a whopping **220 page requests from our website every day!**  
How spine-tingling is that!

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**New Survey**

ASPIA has been asked to participate in another survey on the personal effects of partnering adults with Asperger's Syndrome. We would encourage you to participate if you possibly can because this research is vital to creating the kind of evidence that will help open the eyes of the professional world to provide more empathic, non-judgmental and effective support for partners and family members.

**Giving Neurotypical Partners a Voice** Dr Lisa Abel & Dr Vicki Bitsika from Bond University (Australia) are conducting research into the mental health outcomes for those individuals who are (or recently have been) in an intimate relationship with someone who has been diagnosed with (or is suspected of having) Asperger's syndrome. The aim of the research is to investigate the influence of fatigue, resilience, and stress on depression and anxiety in partners of individuals with Asperger's. While the impact on mental health and well-being in relation to parents with a child with Asperger's syndrome is being researched in earnest, little empirical research has been carried out in relation to the experience of partners of individuals with the disorder. Just as the demands of parenting a child with autism-based difficulties can often tax the emotional and physical resources of caregivers, it is anticipated that being intimately involved with someone with Asperger's syndrome would present its own set of unique challenges and difficulties.

The project involves the completion of a questionnaire and an interview (optional). If you are interested in participating, please contact Dr Lisa Abel via email ([label@bond.edu.au](mailto:label@bond.edu.au)) or alternatively access the questionnaire using the following URL:

<https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=137615&Label1=EnterData>

**Interesting gleanings ...**

Quoting from Counselling Study Notes: *"...Individuals' sense of what is real – including their sense of the nature of their problems, competencies and possible solutions – is constructed in interaction with others as they go through life. ... People make meanings as they interact with others. ... As human beings we are always trying to figure out the meaning of our experiences. ... When we do not have an explanation for something we make one up. ... Central to any answer is an understanding of language, the means by which human beings converse. ... Shifts in client perceptions and definitions occur in contexts – that is, in communities ... individuals always live in ethnic, family, national, socio-economic and religious contexts; they re-shape meanings under the influence of the communities in which they live. ... (It is important to) encourage clients to explore their definitions of reality (problems, miracles, successes, strengths and solutions) as they struggle to create more satisfying and productive lives."*

I'm sure there will be a number of things you'll pick up as you read these comments, but I particularly wanted to emphasise for us the danger of becoming isolated within our own marital and family situations, having our partners as the primary and sometimes only "reference point" for how we perceive ourselves and our situations. Think about this in terms of our children too. In order to hold a balanced perspective on life, our social network must be bigger than our family context, even if we have to be gently assertive to create this. Carol Grigg.

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