

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

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

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

## **NEWSLETTER – June 2011**

Our next support group meeting will be on  
**Saturday 4 June, 2pm – 5pm**  
College of Nursing, 14 Railway Pde, Burwood, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
\$2 Members / \$5 Non-Members (covers room hire, etc)

At this meeting we welcome **Dr Julie Peterson**,  
along with the new Co-Director of her clinic  
**Clinical Psychologist Steve Den-Kaat**  
(see <http://www.otherhalf.com.au/steve.htm> for info about Steve)  
Julie is introducing Steve to our group,  
and both will facilitate group discussion around topics of interest.  
Please bring something to share for afternoon tea.

### **ASPIA's meetings are only suitable for non-Asperger partners and family members.**

ASPIA does not have the expertise to responsibly offer education or support to adults with Asperger's Syndrome. Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome are advised to **see page 2** of this Newsletter and seek out groups specifically set up to address the needs of those with Asperger's Syndrome.  
Thank you for your understanding.

### **ASPIA Lunch Club (New Venue 2011)**

ASPIA Lunch Club meeting before support group meeting  
**Now at LITTLE NEPAL restaurant, Shop C, 135 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney)**  
From Burwood Station, go left & up the hill, a few shops past the Westpac Bank  
and then cross the road. Arrive any time between 12noon & 2pm. All welcome.

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

**Brisbane:** Asperger Partners Support Group (APSG): Phone Helen on 0418 761 652  
or email [helen@timelessvideos.com.au](mailto:helen@timelessvideos.com.au)  
**Brisbane/rural Qld:** Visit [www.aspiepartners.com](http://www.aspiepartners.com)  
**Gold Coast:** Phone Tricia on 0413 085 174 or email [tricia.lemontree@gmail.com](mailto:tricia.lemontree@gmail.com)  
**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: [rozsdsk@iinet.net.au](mailto:rozsdsk@iinet.net.au)  
**Perth, \*new group\*:** [aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com](mailto:aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com)  
**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)

### **Book Supplier – Footprint Books**

For books on a wide range of topics relating to Asperger's Syndrome, including relationships,  
visit Footprint Books (Sydney) [www.footprint.com.au](http://www.footprint.com.au) . Online ordering available.

Wendy Lawson's "**Top Ten Tips to Encourage Engagement and Participation**"  
<http://www.suelarkey.com.au/media/Literalness.pdf>

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<b>ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2011</b>	
	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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday every month – Burwood, Sydney**

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**

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

New website [www.camillaconnollyasd.com](http://www.camillaconnollyasd.com)

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

and a **\*social group in Sydney for diagnosed adults\*** New Calender of events available.

Contact Caroline Smith, the group Co-ordinator at [carolinesmith@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:carolinesmith@autismspectrum.org.au)

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

Thoughts ...

The following comments should really be submitted to a forum where they can be discussed. Our experiences are wide and varied, and my perspective on living with an AS partner is only one perspective among many valid experiences and perspectives. So please feel free to comment or contribute your observations via return email.

"Some time back I found myself telling one of our members that she had to stop expecting her partner to suddenly become "normal" because in effect she was bashing her head against a brick wall, and this would only cause more harm to herself, and also the relationship. I didn't mean this comment in any disrespectful way to either her or her partner. It's just a fact. Our partners have AS, and that's how it is. They will never be neurotypical, even though sometimes we may have the occasional "normal" interaction or situation that inspires hope that "normal" may be possible. This led me to recognise how we naturally ache to find solutions in the context of our relationships. It's a natural bent or instinct within us. It is uncomfortable and unnatural to stay in that state of "un-solution", with no code or tool or key to hand that will bring "normal" and solutions. Incredibly disempowering actually. It's like living in a constant state of unfinished business, combined with confusion, day in and day out, and is probably quite a significant threat to our mental and emotional health, and our future outlook. We just can't get our heads around the fact that our AS loved one will remain AS and can't gradually make a transition to NT, in spite of now having answers and information. We naturally seem to have this expectation and assumption every day that something will finally fall into place or "click" and then from then on our discussions and communication will become "typical" and we'll understand and interpret each other accurately. It is so hard to live in this state of accepting this will never be; that AS is here to stay in the relationship dynamic; accepting that there will be no solution that will bring a sense of "normality"; no magic wand; no code breaker. I am sorry for the bleak outlook today but thank God we can now benefit from the "normalising" process of meeting and identifying with other partners."

Carol.

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