

ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION AUSTRALIA (ASPIA) INCORPORATED

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

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

NEWSLETTER – May 2011

Our next support group meeting will be on
Saturday 7 May, 2pm – 5pm
College of Nursing, 14 Railway Pde, Burwood, 2nd Floor
\$2 Members / \$5 Non-Members (covers room hire, etc)

As an aid to furthering our understanding of Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
we are going to view the highly recommended movie

TEMPLE GRANDIN

The screening will be followed by group discussion
(Please bring something to share for afternoon tea)

Movie stars Claire Danes, Julie Ormond, Catherine O'Hara and David Strathairn.
Temple Grandin paints a picture of a young woman's perseverance and determination while struggling with the isolating challenges of autism at a time when it was still quite unknown. The film chronicles Temple's early diagnosis; her turbulent growth and development during her school years; the enduring support she received from her mother, aunt, and her science teacher; and her emergence as a woman with an innate sensitivity and understanding of animal behaviour.

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

Brisbane/rural Qld: Visit www.aspiepartners.com

Gold Coast: Phone Tricia on 0413 085 174 or email tricia.lemontree@gmail.com

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

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

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

Perth, *new group*: 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

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 . Online ordering available.

ASPIA INC

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ASPIA Newsletter May 2011 Page 2

ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2011	
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, 2nd Saturday every month – Burwood, Sydney

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

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

***New* Brisbane – AU-SOME Women and Girls' Group**

Contact Camilla Connolly camillaconnolly@optusnet.com.au or Rachael Harris Rachael.counsellor@gmail.com

New website www.camillaconnollyasd.com

Aspect also has resources for adults: Email: infoline@autismspectrum.org.au or Phone: 8977 8377

and a ***social group in Sydney for diagnosed adults***

Contact Caroline Smith, the group Co-ordinator at carolinesmith@autismspectrum.org.au

Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality – Liz Dore, www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com

Thoughts ... While ploughing through reading material for my Diploma of Professional Counselling I constantly come across the most interesting thoughts and theories, many of which I'd love to share in our newsletters. The latest gem I came across is a definition of Stages 6 & 7 of ego development by psychodynamic theorist Jane Loevinger. These stages are deemed to be the stages of adulthood. I'm sure you'll find these as interesting as I did:

Stage 6 Autonomy – The ego is autonomous when it can tolerate, rather than condemn, opposing opinions and viewpoints. During this stage, respect is accorded to others who hold differing convictions and principles.

Stage 7 Integration – This stage represents a full acceptance of who one is in terms of ego development. This includes one's strengths as well as weaknesses, and one's successes as well as failures. Conflicting internal demands and the demands of others are now reconciled and tolerated. Integration in this sense implies peace with oneself, recognition of one's total being, and an appreciation of the individuality of others.

My interpretation, as I think these relate to us? My personal feeling is that many partners were already well-developed in these stages when we first embarked on our marital relationships. We were clearly open to seeking out and accepting partners who were "differently interesting", holding the belief that difference would enhance the relationship rather than posing a threat to future function and happiness; we were secure in who we were, then. Our belief also included the assumption that the marital context would be one of mutual appreciation and tolerance, reciprocity of respect and adaptability, and embracing of the differences between us to create a deeply interesting, mature and satisfying union. Many of us still hang on to our belief in this potential, but feel locked into a state of isolation and disconnect inside of our relationships by the ways communication continually tangles up into a conflicting gridlock of meanings and interpretations that create alienation and frustration. Sadly and helplessly, difference has progressively led to division rather than mutual respect and embrace. As a conclusion, perhaps we can just use these definitions of adulthood as a benchmark for ourselves, to help us reclaim and maintain our own psychological well-being as truly autonomous and integrated individuals, in spite of our circumstances. Be who you are, or were, and go on from there. As always, I strongly recommend securing professional counselling in order to regain and retain perspective, and don't forget our group's self-care suggestions listed on the website: <http://www.aspia.org.au/pdf/2009/ASPIASelf-CareSuggestions6June09.pdf>. (Carol)

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