

ASPERGER SYNDROME PARTNER INFORMATION AUSTRALIA (ASPIA) INCORPORATED

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

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

NEWSLETTER – November 2011

Our next support group meeting will be this **Saturday 5 November, 2pm – 5pm**

College of Nursing, 14 Railway Pde, Burwood, 2nd Floor

\$5 Non-Members / \$2 Members (covers room hire, etc)

Please bring something simple to share for afternoon tea.

Psychologist **Eleanor Gittins** will be speaking for us on

"Alexithymia - difficulty in regulating emotions cognitively"

Eleanor's sessions are always highly informative and we are very grateful for her significant contribution to the education of ASPIA group members over many years now.

ASPIA's meetings are only suitable for non-Asperger individuals

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

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 gaps.group@gmail.com

Brisbane/rural Qld: Visit www.aspiepartners.com

Gold Coast: Phone Tricia on 0413 085 174 or email tricia.alaska@yahoo.com.au

Northern Rivers, NSW: Phone Debbie on (02) 6676 0483, Email:
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

Perth: 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

Possible new group in Sydney for **parents of women and older teen girls with AS**
Contact Alison Miller (one of ASPIA's original members) on rmil6566@bigpond.net.au
Revesby area.

ASPIA Meeting Dates for remainder of 2011

November 5

December 3

SEE OVER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OUR UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP WITH RUDY SIMONE ON "ASPERGERS IN RELATIONSHIPS"

ASPIA INC

ABN 30 583 771 917

PO Box 57 Macarthur Square LPO MACARTHUR NSW 2560

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ASPIA Newsletter November 2011 Page 2

Educational Workshop on Saturday 12 November 2011, 1pm – 5pm

“ASPERGERS AND RELATIONSHIPS”

with

Rudy Simone

Author of “22 Things a Woman must know if she loves a Man with Asperger’s Syndrome”,
“Aspergirls” and “Aspergers on the Job”.

Being on the Spectrum herself, Rudy can give rare insights to help us better understand and manage relationships affected by Asperger’s Syndrome. Includes section on Parenting.

This workshop will be held at the **College of Nursing** (current venue for ASPIA meetings)
Baxter Auditorium on Level 3

Registration Essential - \$60 per person or \$100 for a couple/two attending together.

Afternoon Tea included.

See ASPIA’s website for Registration form

http://www.aspia.org.au/eventsarchive/2011/Rudy_Simone_Workshop_Flyer_12Nov11.pdf

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
- ***New listing* Forum-workshops for ASDian adults** on selected Wednesday afternoons at Hamilton South (NSW), 1.30pm-4pm. Call Leigh 02 4966 1717 or email aut_s_pport@yahoo.com.au
- **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
- **Brisbane – AU-SOME Women and Girls’ Group**
Contact Camilla Connolly camillaconnolly@optusnet.com.au or Rachael Harris
Rachael.counsellor@gmail.com 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*** New Calendar of events available.
Contact Caroline Smith, the group Co-ordinator at carolinesmith@autismspectrum.org.au
- Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality – Liz Dore, www.relationshipsandprivatetuff.com
- **ASTEEN: Teen social/support group**, including yahoo group
Contact Christine Ayo christineayo@optusnet.com.au Ph: 0413 781 626

Additional News Items:

ASPECT (Autism Spectrum Australia) is conducting research on the
experiences of adults with Asperger’s Syndrome and High Functioning Autism,
and their parents.

See ASPECT’s website for questionnaires

<http://www.autismspectrum.org.au/a2i1i3i2i1i593i633/new-aspect-research.htm>

This is a another wonderful opportunity to contribute to Australian research that will improve awareness and services for adults with ASD’s and their families in the future.

Film Festival in Sydney

Visit www.oneofus.org.au to see information about a Film Festival exploring Mental Health.

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ASPIA Newsletter November 2011 Page 3

Artist in our midst ... 2011 Portia Geach Memorial Award

I would like to make special mention of one of ASPIA's members **Ah Too Chew**, and congratulate her on her selection as a Finalist for the 2011 Portia Geach Memorial Award, with her portrait of "Benedicta". The Portia Geach Memorial Award is a "celebration of Female Australian Artists". Ah Too's portrait of "Benedicta" has been chosen as one of 52 works to be displayed in the Exhibition at S H Ervin Gallery, Watson's Road, Observatory Hill, The Rocks. Exhibition ends 6 November; open daily 11am – 5pm (except Monday).

Thoughts ...

Recently, an Aspie who is dear to me was given some feedback about himself from a friend who he'd known for 15 years and who he trusted and respected very much. The feedback was that she'd always found him to be an "intense" person. It wasn't said in a critical way, but in a matter of fact way that was consistent with the context of the conversation. It was interesting to watch his response at the time, and a privilege to be the one he confided in later when he'd had time to ponder and process the comment.

Before I share his response, I think it's important for us to pause and note that there was a time delay before he was able to respond, but encouraging that he was able to go through a process of thinking about what was said, self-reflecting, coming to his own understanding and then verbalizing what he believed was the reason or explanation for the characteristic his friend had commented about.

He began his explanation by saying "You know how when Aspies enter a new situation they don't typically pick up on the clues and cues around them to know how to behave and what to say?" I acknowledged this. He said that this is how it is for him, so he has to look for information deliberately, and that the intensity his friend had noticed about him was probably how he came across while he went through the process of scanning desperately for information so that he would know how to behave and what to say in that context.

I thought this was a very fair and reasonable comment, and I found it really helped me to further understand some of those AS characteristics and moments I've found so confusing over the years.

When you think about it, if you add the fact that AS people generally don't generalize, ie, transfer learned behaviour from one situation to another situation that is similar but not the same, then they are going through this deliberate scanning process constantly, looking for information that will guide them in how to behave and what to say. Exhausting I would say. Anxiety laden in fact, when you think about how afraid they are of making a mistake or getting it "wrong".

Writing this has also directed my thoughts to those moments we all talk about when our partners respond quickly with a defense or rationalisation about their behaviour that just doesn't sit true with us. Perhaps their response has more to do with an inability to think and reflect on the spot, clutching at straws, trying to save face and an attempt to deflect a comment, feedback or criticism they don't understand and need time to think about and process.

Perhaps we could help them and help ourselves by not taking to heart or judging instantly the words they speak in haste, and by recognizing that they do need that extra time to process and reflect. Like I said in my first paragraph, I felt very privileged to hear the response later, because so often we don't hear back from them and are never quite sure what they are thinking. Perhaps they take on board more than we think. Carol Grigg.

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