

# ASPIA Newsletter August 2012

*Mutual understanding of the Asperger Marriage experience*

## **ASPIA Partner Support Group Meeting (Sydney) – this Saturday 4th August**

It has been suggested by group members that we screen a portion of the DVD of Tony Attwood presenting a workshop to partners again. We have so many new people attending these days, and many have never heard Tony present a workshop. Always very worthwhile.

Date: Saturday 4 August, 2012

Time: 2.00pm – 5.00pm

**The College of Nursing**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
14 Railway Parade, Burwood (Sydney)

\$10.00 per non-member, \$5.00 per member  
Please bring something to share for afternoon tea.

(Group members, please remember that our meetings are not suitable for your AS partner, unless we advertise that specifically.)

### **Lunch Club prior to support group**

LITTLE NEPAL restaurant, Shop C,  
135 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney)  
Arrive any time between 12noon & 2pm.  
All welcome. (Directions: From Burwood Station, go left & up the hill, a few shops past the Westpac Bank and then cross the road.)

### **Remaining ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2012**

	August 4
September 1	October 6
November 3	December 1

### **Central Coast Group (NSW)**

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month  
Next meeting is on 18th August at 2pm  
Empire Bay Garden Nursery & Cafe  
Poole Crescent, Empire Bay.

**ASPIA's Handbook for Partner Support** is our own self-help guide for understanding and living with a partner with Asperger's Syndrome.

**Available as an eBook which can be downloaded immediately and costs \$20.00**  
<http://www.lulu.com/content/e-book/aspias-handbook-for-partner-support/12936851>

**or order the paperback for \$35.00 (plus postage).**

<http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/aspias-handbook-for-partner-support/12781936>

### **ASPIA Membership \$55.00 per year**

One of the benefits of membership is access to our private Facebook group. We've had several new members join lately and everyone is enjoying the discussions. It is lovely to be in touch with others between meetings, or for those who can't get to meetings, it's a way of being part of the group anyway.

Please contact us for information about how to become a member and then how to join the Facebook group.

### **ASPIA also has a "public" facebook page "Like" us to join**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aspia-Inc-Asperger-Syndrome-Partner-Information-Australia-Inc/293809577377381>

(Remember that when you "like" our public page it can be seen by your other facebook friends.

Our private group for members is secret, & not seen by your other facebook friends.)

### **Mentoring for Partners**

By Skype, Email, Phone, \$30 per half hour.  
Carol Grigg, Dip Counselling, Member ACA  
Ph: 0408 817 828

[www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au](http://www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au)

**The Minds & Hearts Clinic in Brisbane** is offering a downloadable presentation on **Emotion Management for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome** for \$16.50.

<http://www.mindsandhearts.net>, click on "Resources".

**There is a new book out by Maxine Aston**  
**“What Men with Asperger Syndrome want to know about Women, Dating and Relationships.”** Foreword by Tony Attwood. Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.  
[www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com) or <http://www.footprint.com.au>

### **Other Partner Support Groups in Australia**

#### • **Central Coast, NSW:**

Third Saturday every month (see first page)  
 Contact ASPIA [info@aspia.org.au](mailto:info@aspia.org.au)

• **Newcastle, NSW:** Possibility of new group forming. Anyone interested contact ASPIA.

#### • **Northern Rivers, NSW:**

Phone Debbie on (02) 6676 0483

Email: [northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com)

#### • **Brisbane:**

#### **Asperger Partners Support Group (APSG):**

Phone Helen on 0418 761 652

Email [gaps.group@gmail.com](mailto:gaps.group@gmail.com)

#### • **Brisbane/rural Qld:**

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

#### • **Gold Coast:**

Phone Tricia on 0413 085 174

Email [tricia.alaska@yahoo.com.au](mailto:tricia.alaska@yahoo.com.au)

#### • **Perth:**

Phone Roz on (08) 9284 5252

Email: [rozsdesk@inet.net.au](mailto:rozsdesk@inet.net.au)

#### • **Perth:**

Email Melanie [aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com](mailto:aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com)

#### • **Melbourne:**

Visit forum at [www.aspartneraus.org](http://www.aspartneraus.org)

or email Melissa [meraine@bigpond.net.au](mailto:meraine@bigpond.net.au)

#### • **Adelaide:**

Phone Heike Haffer on 0431 039 136

Email [heikehaffer@hotmail.com](mailto:heikehaffer@hotmail.com)

### **A word about ASPIA Meetings**

ASPIA 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 next column for a listing of groups specifically set up to address the needs of those with Asperger's Syndrome. Thank you for your understanding.

### **The following is a list of Support groups and resources for adults with Asperger's Syndrome**

#### **“Joining Hans” Group for Adults with AS**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday every month** Burwood, Sydney  
 Registrations essential: 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

**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](mailto:aut_s_pport@yahoo.com.au)

**ASPECT** also has resources for adults  
 email [infoline@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:infoline@autismspectrum.org.au)  
 or phone 8977 8377

#### **Social group in Sydney for diagnosed adults**

(co-ordinated by ASPECT) Contact Annie Sloggett on 0409 603 582 or [asloggett@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:asloggett@autismspectrum.org.au)

#### **Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality**

Liz Dore [www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com](http://www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com)

#### **ASTEEN - Teen social/support group**

includes yahoo group Contact Christine Ayo [christinefayo@gmail.com](mailto:christinefayo@gmail.com) Ph: 0469 577 723  
 or Lyn Starr [randlstarr@bigpond.com](mailto:randlstarr@bigpond.com)  
 Ph: 0408 445 019

**Sue Larkey** often holds workshops with Tony Attwood and her website has lots of useful tips  
[www.suelarkey.com](http://www.suelarkey.com)

The Northern Sydney Institute of **TAFE** at Hornsby is offering the program **“Social & Occupational Communication skills for young adults with Asperger's Syndrome”** in 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester. Email [Simon.Piggott@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Simon.Piggott@det.nsw.edu.au)

### **Research Participation - NT/AS Intimate Relationships**

We mentioned in our last couple of newsletters that Dr Lisa Abel and her colleague Elyse McNeil are inviting partners to participate in a new research project on AS/NT Intimate Relationships.

Some have had trouble accessing the questionnaire online, but this has now been corrected.

Lisa and Elyse have emailed as follows:

We would like to remind your members of our research study investigating the relationship experiences of partners in NT-AS intimate relationships. Partner input is vital for our understanding of these intimate relationships and will also assist the development of appropriate psychotherapeutic intervention strategies for couples who seek services from psychologists and other relationship counsellors.

While both partners are invited to participate in this research, this is NOT a mandatory requirement for participation. We welcome all of those who wish to contribute.

For further details of the study, please contact Elyse McNeil at [emcneil@bond.edu.au](mailto:emcneil@bond.edu.au)) or Dr Lisa Abel at [label@bond.edu.au](mailto:label@bond.edu.au) .

The URL link to the online questionnaire is <https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=147628>

### **At our last ASPIA meeting ...**

At our partner support group meeting on July 7, our visiting psychologists (Renee & Ken Ferris, Assist Psychology) facilitated a discussion about the concepts of the Five Love Languages (book by Gary Chapman).

Whilst the concepts need some additional interpretation for an NT/AS marriage relationship, it is very validating for NT partners to recognise their own love language.

One of our most regular group members made the following comment afterwards - "There was so much that I could relate to, I left the meeting feeling quite upbeat and empowered. For some reason I stopped feeling bad about everything, the first time in months.

Maybe it's because I now have some tools to help identify and articulate my needs in the relationship so I can let go of some of the anger and frustration and move forward."

These thoughts on the 5 Love Languages were shared and discussed on facebook, and have been included here for everyone else.

Identifying our own personal love language may help us recover a little more of our own sense of who we are.

### **Thoughts ...**

Recently I was chatting with a young woman with significant Asperger traits who is in a stable and meaningful relationship with a guy who also appears to have strong AS traits. There is a large age difference, but they do seem to share a special understanding together.

We were talking about one little trouble spot that had emerged a few times in their relationship, and as I gave her some suggestions, she acknowledged that she could see the logic in my comments and that they sounded fair and reasonable.

She went on to say however that on her own she doesn't know what is "fair and reasonable" in a relationship, and that's why she was asking me. She also said that without help she doesn't know what boundaries are appropriate or where to place them.

I'm finding it a bit hard to find the words here to convey the way these comments shocked me, and are still impacting on me deeply. Like another aha moment, but more significant.

We assume that everyone has a fair idea of what is "fair and reasonable" in a relationship, and where respectful boundaries should be placed. But with someone with AS, this must form part of the instinct that is missing. I can only imagine how bewildering it must be for them to be in relationship without that instinctive guide.

I suspect the implications for us are enormous too.

Perhaps our partners' own preferences and priorities are their only reference points. Perhaps this explains the lack of reciprocation, they literally don't know what is a reasonable exchange or what their contribution should look like. Perhaps this explains the need for rules. The demands. And perhaps this also stresses how important it is for us to firmly and calmly implement "reasonable" boundaries, and the need to rely on professional guidance. My mind is working overtime, but I'll have to leave the rest with your own imaginations for now ... Carol.