

ASPIA Newsletter October 2012

Mutual understanding of the Asperger Marriage experience

ASPIA Partner Support Group Meeting (Sydney) – this Saturday 6 October

Psychologist Michelle de Vries Robbé will be facilitating an interactive session with a focus on each person coming away with one strategy/tactic to enhance or better cope with their relationship with an Asperger partner – be it current or in the past. All too often in an Aspie relationship we “hold back” our true nature in order to accommodate the Aspie partner’s needs. This could be an opportunity to explore how to both support your Aspie partner and keep your sense of self. Michelle will use group work methods derived from the field of Positive Psychology aimed at empowering people to lead more authentic lives.

Michelle is a registered psychologist in private practice in Chatswood and is passionate about supporting the little-understood journey of the NT partners of Aspies. She has a son and ex-husband of 20 years with Aspergers and so understands the journey firsthand. She is looking forward to this opportunity to give something back to ASPIA after all the support she has received in her journey of losing and reclaiming her sense of self.

Date: Saturday 6 October, 2012

Time: 2.00pm – 5.00pm

**The College of Nursing, 2nd 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.)

Remaining ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2012

	October 6
November 3	December 1

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.)

Central Coast Group (NSW)

3rd Saturday of the month
Next meeting is on 20 October at 2pm
Empire Bay Garden Nursery & Cafe
Poole Crescent, Empire Bay.

Purchase our own self-help guide:
“ASPIA’s Handbook for Partner Support”
Contains clues for understanding our AS partners, as well as ideas for maintaining our own well-being and managing the relationship difficulties.

Paperback is \$35.00 (plus postage) - order online.

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

eBook is \$20 - immediate download

<http://www.lulu.com/content/e-book/aspias-handbook-for-partner-support/12936851>

Being a financial membership of ASPIA Inc is an option you can consider for \$55.00 per year

One of the benefits of membership is access to our private Facebook group. We have 26 participants now and the extra contact between meetings is very reassuring.
Please contact us for information about how to become a member and then how to join the Facebook group.

On 19 June someone transferred \$55 for membership into our bank account but did not include their name. Please help us identify you!

**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

News

90 minute downloadable presentation by Tony Attwood and Michelle Garnett is available on the topic: **Women in a relationship with a man with Asperger’s Syndrome or the personality characteristics of Asperger’s Syndrome.**

Follow link from homepage

<http://www.mindsandhearts.net>

Maxine Aston has a new book

“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 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

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

• **Northern Rivers, NSW:**

Phone Debbie on (02) 6676 0483
Email: northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com

• **Brisbane:**

Asperger Partners Support Group (APSG):

Phone Helen on 0418 761 652
Email gaps.group@gmail.com

• **Brisbane/rural Qld:**

Visit www.aspiepartners.com

• **Gold Coast:**

Phone Tricia on 0413 085 174
Email tricia.alaska@yahoo.com.au

• **Perth:**

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

• **Perth:**

Email Melanie aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com

• **Melbourne:**

Visit forum at www.aspartneraus.org
or email Melissa meraine@bigpond.net.au

• **Adelaide:**

Phone Heike Haffer on 0431 039 136
Email heikehaffer@hotmail.com

Brisbane - couples group

Asperger Services Australia (ASA) are setting up a **couples group** in Brisbane. Brisbane readers please let ASA know if you are interested
www.asperger.asn.au

Please remember that 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 below 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

Support group for Adults with AS

North Shore, Sydney

Visit website for announcements 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

ASPECT also has resources for adults

email 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

Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality

Liz Dore www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com

ASTEEN - Teen social/support group

includes yahoo group Contact Christine Ayo christinefayo@gmail.com Ph: 0469 577 723
or Lyn Starr 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

Great Websites for all of us to keep an eye on:

Our own ! www.aspia.org.au

Jeroen Decates (Sydney) www.jdpsy.org

Tony Attwood's www.tonyattwood.com.au

Asperger Services Australia (Brisbane) www.asperger.asn.au

Autism Spectrum Australia (Sydney) www.autismspectrum.org.au

Participants still needed please!
Research study investigating the relationship experiences of partners in NT-AS intimate relationships

For details of the study, please see our previous newsletters or contact Elyse McNeil at emcneil@bond.edu.au or Dr Lisa Abel at label@bond.edu.au .

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

Thoughts ...

One of the things I'm enjoying about my new career as a counsellor is the opportunity for extra training on topics of interest, or access to useful resources that I wasn't aware of before. It's good to be focusing on things other than Aspergers too.

One of the things I've noticed is that most people respond to guides, tools and lists of suggestions when struggling with an issue, be it anxiety, depression, stress, relationship issues, loss & grief, parenting, etc. We all seem to look for a benchmark, for validation, for concrete clues, for ways to measure how well we're doing, or not. And then we look for some steps to follow, or tasks and activities to do to bring about improvement or the change we hope for.

As partners of adults with AS, we are constantly scratching for ideas to manage and improve our relationships. Something that might just "click" with our partners, or in our particular situation. And everyone's partner and situation is different.

Recently I've been collecting some resources on marital counselling by Dr John Gottman. You may already know his name from his book "Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child".

Dr Gottman has done some very interesting research and work with married couples over a very long time and has written several books as well as many articles. Included in his work are some lists such as the Predictors of Divorce, 7 Principles on the Road to Happily Ever After, the Magic 5 Hours for Marital Bliss, etc.

I'm not saying that this material would necessarily work in our situations, but I am drawn to the fact that the lists and suggestions are so concrete, which is what our situations do need, and it's just interesting to have a bit of a benchmark.

The Predictors of Divorce do concern me because I believe they are very much present in all of our situations. Examples are harsh start-ups to discussions, criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling, flooding or feeling overwhelmed, increased physiological arousal leading to fight, flight or freeze, failure of relationship repair attempts, negativity about the past, failure of men to accept influence from their wives. At least for us, our knowledge of AS means we have particular reasons for why these characteristics are present, but it is validating to know that it is not healthy for these to be continuously present in a relationship, and in "normal" marriages they would more than likely signal that the relationship is heading for divorce.

If you'd like to research this all a bit more, a google search finds quite a bit of stuff, or you can visit Dr Gottman's website at www.gottman.com and order books, etc. Another website at www.marleneandbob.com had some useful articles too, including Dr Gottman's stuff.

On another note, I'd like to suggest the website of the Conflict Resolution Network in Chatswood which has lots of free downloadable hand-outs and ideas. Once again, clear steps and guides that are always useful. www.crnhq.org

Carol.