

ASPIA Newsletter September 2012

Mutual understanding of the Asperger Marriage experience

ASPIA Partner Support Group Meeting (Sydney) – this Saturday 1 September

Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates will be our presenter for this meeting.

Jeroen has been one of our best educators and supporters since we commenced meetings in 2003. We highly recommend him for private consultations due to his unique understanding of Asperger marriage situations and the validation and guidance he is able to provide for individuals with AS, partners and also couples. His contact details are on our website.

At this meeting Jeroen will answer our questions and facilitate a discussion on whatever topics we need him to.

Date: Saturday 1 September, 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.)

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

September 1	October 6
November 3	December 1

Central Coast Group (NSW)

3rd Saturday of the month

Next meeting is on 15th September 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 is \$55.00 per year

One of the benefits of membership is access to our private Facebook group. We have 22 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

Last month we advertised a downloadable presentation by The Minds & Hearts Clinic in Brisbane on **Emotion Management for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome.**

Tony Attwood has let us know that there is also now a 90 minute downloadable presentation available for **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: rozskdesk@inet.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

Eventually ASPIA would love to be able to offer a **couples group** too, with the help of our specialist psychologists. However, in the meantime ...

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

"Joining Hans" Group for Adults with AS

2nd Saturday every month Burwood, Sydney
Registrations essential: 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

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

Participation requested - 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 ...**Predictability in Unpredictability**

I realised the other day that perhaps one of the keys to coping better within our relationships is to just simply recognise and accept that inconsistency, unpredictability, incongruence and contradiction are part and parcel of how we experience the personality, actions and attitudes of the person with AS on a day to day basis. It's part of the "reality" and the "landscape" that we've talked about in our Self-Care Suggestions.

We suffer much anguish over this aspect, and spend an enormous amount of emotional energy trying to gather up or contain the AS person's actions and responses into what we would perceive as a consistency of character and behaviour so that we can get the measure of who they are and how to respond to them with some

measure of consistency. But yet they keep us guessing every moment of every day, coming at us from left-field time and time again.

I'm suggesting that perhaps the energy we are using to fight or contain this unsettling and traumatic phenomenon could perhaps be salvaged a little, if we can just accept and be more at peace with the continual presence of inconsistency. That at least there is consistency in the fact that they will behave and respond in an unpredictable and inconsistent fashion (in our estimation). Maybe this is the predictability that we can be certain of.

It's ironical that the person with AS actually finds us completely unpredictable, hence the tendency to try to exert control over our actions and choices and the household environment, or on the other hand, to disconnect and avoid.

Yes, people can be unpredictable, we would all agree with that. However, we are typically able to operate by an internal instinct that the person with AS is unable to see or measure. It's inbuilt. We don't need rules or procedures or structure to navigate normal day to day life, relationships and situations, even the unpredictable bits. We have an internal rudder that responds automatically and spontaneously and guides us "in the moment". Except with a partner or individual with AS, where we always seem to get it wrong. Oh, the contradictions ... !

So, my point is simply this, we will continue to experience our partners as inconsistent in their actions and responses. This is a fact and is actually predictable. Therefore ... it may be far better for us to save our emotional energy by adjusting our expectations to expect this and just remain focused instead on what we need to be and do for ourselves and our children within the situation. We may find we can insulate ourselves a little, re-build a little resilience and re-create at least some degree of consistency along the way. Carol.