

# ASPIA Newsletter - December 2013

*"Mutual understanding of the Asperger Marriage experience"*



*Merry Christmas to all our readers*

**Our next Partner Support Group meeting** will be this coming **Saturday 7 December**, 2pm - 5pm.

**The College of Nursing**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
14 Railway Parade, Burwood (Sydney)  
\$10.00 per non-member, \$5.00 per member

Come along to this meeting and watch the **Temple Grandin** movie with us.

**"Autism gave her a vision. She gave it a voice."**

"Temple Grandin is an autistic woman who has become one of the top scientists in the humane livestock handling industry."

This fascinating and heartwarming story of her life (played by Actress Claire Danes) gives wonderful insights into the thinking and perspective of people on the Autism Spectrum.

Many in our group love this movie and have found it really eye-opening.



**Please bring something to share for a "Christmas" themed afternoon tea.**

**Please Note: ASPIA meetings are offered to non-Asperger adults only.**

ASPIA's aim is to provide an emotionally safe place for partners who need support and education from a non-Asperger perspective. New attendees are interviewed on arrival to confirm motivation for attending.

If you have AS and you attempt to attend an ASPIA meeting you will be refused entry.

There are dedicated groups and meetings available specifically for adults with AS. ASPIA is not one of these. See our website & newsletter for information about AS groups.

### **ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2014**

February 1	March 1
April 5	May 3
June 7	July 5
August 2	September 6
October 4	November 1
December 6	

### **LUNCH CLUB**

**Held prior to our monthly meetings**

Anyone attending the meeting is welcome to come along between 12noon & 1.30pm and join others for a coffee or bite to eat at

#### **LITTLE NEPAL Restaurant**

Shop C, 135 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney)

(Directions: From Burwood Station, go left & up the hill, a few shops past the Westpac Bank and then cross the road.)

## **NEW BOOK !!**

Kathy Marshack has released a new book that I'm sure most of you will be very keen to read!

### **"Out of Mind - Out of Sight: Parenting with a Partner with Asperger Syndrome"**

Kathy is already the author of the book "**Life with a Partner or Spouse with Asperger Syndrome: Going over the Edge?**" **Practical Steps to Saving You and Your Relationship** which many partners have found very helpful.

Kathy also moderates a constructive "meetup" for partners online.

See Kathy's website: [www.kmarshack.com](http://www.kmarshack.com)

### **ASPIA's Handbook for Partner Support**

**In Stock!** I presently have paperback copies of ASPIA's Handbook in stock for \$35 including postage/packaging. Email me with postal address & I will send you payment instructions.

For other recommended book titles, see our book list on the website - [www.aspia.org.au](http://www.aspia.org.au)

**Sydney Stockist of AS books, order online: Footprint Books, Warriewood (Sydney)**  
<http://www.footprint.com.au>

## **SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS**

### **New Counselling Practice in Sydney specialising in Grief**

Congratulations to **Liz Pash** on the establishment of her own **Grief Counselling Practice in Epping, Sydney**. Liz is a Social Worker, Counsellor & Educator with understanding of the AS marriage journey including the experiences of loss and grief along the way.

Contact Liz on 0498 964 275 or  
Email [lizlpash@hotmail.com](mailto:lizlpash@hotmail.com)

### **Personal Counselling for partners**

By phone, skype or email.  
Carol Grigg, Dip Counselling, Member ACA  
Carol has personal experience of an AS marriage (20 years) and 13 years' experience supporting partners through ASPIA.  
For appointments phone or text 0408 817 828  
[www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au](http://www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au)

**For recommended Psychologists, see the "Professionals List" on ASPIA's website**

## **OTHER PARTNER SUPPORT GROUPS in Australia**

### **Central Coast, NSW**

This group will now meet **every 3 months**  
**Next meeting to be advised**  
Empire Bay Garden Nursery & Café,  
Poole Crescent, Empire Bay  
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:**

**Queensland Asperger Partners' Support Group (QAPS):**

Phone Helen on 0418 761 652  
Email [qaps.group@gmail.com](mailto:qaps.group@gmail.com)

### **New - Toowoomba Asperger Partners' Support (TAPS Group)**

Phone Sheena on 0418 790 216  
Email [the.taps.group@gmail.com](mailto:the.taps.group@gmail.com)

### **New - Tiaro, Wide Bay (Qld)**

Phone Pat on 07 4193 9239  
Email [davies.pat@gmail.com](mailto:davies.pat@gmail.com)

### **Perth:**

Phone Roz on (08) 9284 5252  
Email: [rozsdesk@inet.net.au](mailto:rozsdesk@inet.net.au)

### **Melbourne:**

Visit forum at <http://aspartneraus.org/vanilla/>  
or email Melissa [meraine@bigpond.net.au](mailto:meraine@bigpond.net.au)  
Also, Blackburn  
<http://www.aspergersvic.org.au/partners/>

### **Adelaide:**

Phone Heike Haffer on 0431 039 136  
Email [heikehaffer@hotmail.com](mailto:heikehaffer@hotmail.com)

## **Interesting Articles and comments:**

A Letter to my Husband, who has ASD:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/nov/23/letter-to-my-husband-asd-autism>

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"The quality of your conversations determines the quality of your relationship"

## **SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ASPERGER'S SYNDROME**

**For recommended Psychologists see the "Professionals List" on ASPIA's website.**

### **Groups and other Contacts:**

**"Joining Hans" Group for Adults with AS**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday every month** Burwood, Sydney  
 Registrations essential: Contact Eleanor Gittins  
 Ph 0408 954 358 or [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

**Aspect's Adult Social Group** – for adults with  
 Asperger's or high functioning autism. Contact  
 Caroline on 0409 603 582.  
[adultsocialgroup@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:adultsocialgroup@autismspectrum.org.au)  
 For more information:  
[www.autismspectrum.org.au/adultsocialgroups](http://www.autismspectrum.org.au/adultsocialgroups)

**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

### **Thought ...**

I recently attended an educational meeting where one of the speakers did a brief but very informative presentation on the recent changes to the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual V (DSM-V) in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorder. In the DSM-IV, Asperger's Syndrome was recognised as a sub-category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. In the DSM-V, all sub-categories have been removed, and are now just "Autism Spectrum Disorder".

I'll leave it to our ASPIA educators to make any further comment about the DSM-V, although if you'd like to read for yourself, go to the website of the American Psychiatric Association <http://www.psychiatry.org/dsm5> and click on the fact sheet for "Autism Spectrum Disorder".

What I want to mention here though is a phrase in the diagnostic manual that caught my attention rather profoundly and got me thinking, as I tend to do.

It says "This criteria change encourages earlier diagnosis of ASD but also allows *people whose symptoms may not be fully recognized until social demands exceed their capacity* to receive the diagnosis.

How often do we talk about not really recognizing our partner's AS traits or the significance of those traits earlier on, particularly before marriage? And we wonder how they managed so well before they got married, particularly those who have friends, a "social set" and have survived uni, etc.

I've often mentioned to partners that the individual with AS may manage in a relationship ok until the first child is born, after which more and more difficulties begin to emerge as they can no longer cope in a situation that includes more than one other person. Add subsequent children and the challenges are multiplied, add a change in jobs, moving house, etc and the situation is way beyond their capacity and the non-Asperger partner finds herself/himself absorbing more and more responsibility within the family.

This sentence in the DSM-V says to me that individuals with AS do have capacity up to a point, and that at some point social demands exceed that capacity. After that their symptoms become more recognizable. This adds another reason why it is only us, the partners, who make this observation and why others find it so hard to believe us, even our partner's family members. This says to me that the traits may have only emerged in a significant way as the demands of adult life have increased, which of course is the context that we share with them (Cassandra!?) Carol Grigg.

### **ASPIA website to be updated:**

If you would like to recommend some great websites, book suggestions, facebook pages, professionals, information, etc that have helped you, and that you'd like to see listed on or linked from ASPIA's website, please let us know by return email or [info@aspia.org.au](mailto:info@aspia.org.au)