

# ASPIA Newsletter - November 2013

*"Mutual understanding of the Asperger Marriage experience"*

## **November Meeting**

Our next meeting will be this coming  
**Saturday 2 November 2013**

**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.

### **Psychologist ELEANOR GITTINS**

Will be attending our meeting and bringing us another of her wonderful presentations. We have asked Eleanor to talk again on the neurological and emotional differences in Asperger's Syndrome, which she is able to explain in such a clear way for us.

Eleanor has been contributing solidly to our education and understanding for ten years, and receives referrals through our website. We appreciate her deeply.

Eleanor has her own Psychology Practice at Illawong, Sydney.

Eleanor also facilitates the "Joining Hans" group for adults with Asperger's Syndrome.

### **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.

### **Remaining ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2013**

November 2

December 7

## **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.)

### **Reminder to financial members of ASPIA:**

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting (AGM) at 1pm this Saturday 2nd November, just prior to our regular meeting time. Please attend if you can, or send your apologies through if you can't.

## **BOOKS**

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

Paperback:

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

eBook (PDF) - immediate download

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

### **Asperger Awareness: A Key to Success for IT and Technical Managers** (Stephen Plowright)

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/144673885X/>

### **The Audacity of Difference: Revealing our True Colours** (Carol Grigg)

This is my own title in which I share a little of my personal journey in an AS world.

Paperback:

<http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/the-audacity-of-difference/13421417>

eBook:

<http://www.lulu.com/content/e-book/the-audacity-of-difference-revealing-our-true-colours/13422000>

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**

**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 Met 21/9, 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 [gaps.group@gmail.com](mailto:gaps.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: [rozskdesk@inet.net.au](mailto:rozskdesk@inet.net.au)
- **Perth:**  
 Email Melanie [aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com](mailto:aspiepartnerswa@hotmail.com)
- **Melbourne:**  
 Visit forum at <http://aspartneraus.org/vanilla/>  
 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)

## **Personal counselling/mentoring for partners**

Phone, skype or email, \$30 per half hour.  
 Carol Grigg, Dip Counselling, Member ACA  
 For appointments phone or text 0408 817 828  
[www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au](http://www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au)

I have copies of ASPIA’s Handbook in stock for \$35 including postage. Email me with postal address & I will send you payment instructions.

## **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

## **Survey Request**

Researchers at Deakin University Melbourne (Australia) have asked me to continue advertising the study they are conducting looking at the outcome of an ASD diagnosis on an intimate relationship, for both partners with ASD and their neurotypical partners.

At present there is a lack of research in this area. It is hoped that this research will help to guide the development of future interventions for individuals with ASD and their partners.

### **What does it involve?**

This is an anonymous online questionnaire that will take approximately 15 mins for each partner to complete. Both partners (those with ASD and those who are neurotypical, i.e., do not have ASD) are asked to complete the questionnaire - once the first partner completes their section, a unique link is generated which you can then send to your partner to complete in their own time.

Here is the link:

<http://bit.ly/ASD-COUPLE>

In advance, thank you for helping us to further the knowledge base in this important area.



Katherine Victoria

**If you haven't already, please consider contributing to this study outlined above.**

### **Thought ...**

One of the clues we are given to help us communicate with our partners is to remember that they cannot process all the information we are giving them all at once. Words, sentences, meaning, tone, body language, emotion, eye contact ... all of these channels, all at once.

This can explain why they flair up or withdraw, or why we seem to end up in a tangle over some irrelevant tangent. Misinterpretation, confusion, frustration; all leaving us feeling so disempowered and with a sense that we can't negotiate or resolve anything.

A recent experience of mine has given me a little more insight into what an individual with AS may experience when we talk to them.

I have a manager at work whose style of management I struggle with, and I know I'm not the only one. We know she means well and she's fun outside of work.

However, one thing I realised a couple of weeks ago is that I actually don't understand a good deal of what she says to me.

Of course, we have very different roles and each has its own realm of expertise, knowledge and language, as in any workplace or walk in life. But she rattles off acronyms and jargon I'm not familiar with and can only guess at and I nod and say "sure", dreading that she'll ask me a question before I scurry back to my desk and hope I can dig up a few clues in the recent emails she's flooded our inboxes with.

Perhaps this is a reflection on my capacity for comprehension which of course is partly true, but it has to be her too.

I can laugh at this situation because in most situations I usually have enough of an idea to fill in the gaps or find the information I need.

But it occurred to me that perhaps this is how our partners feel when we try to talk to them and they lack the knowledge to be able to fill in the gaps.

Topics such as emotions, communication, relationships, social expectations, boundaries, manners, good will, etc are not typically their areas of knowledge and expertise. They are ours though.

What if they can't even begin to guess at the gist of what we're saying because they haven't recognised the starting point and can't follow the thread?

Maybe they just grab hold of the one random phrase they do recognise and hijack the conversation with this? Perhaps this is how they cover their discomfort when they can't carry the conversation with us, or why some tend to dominate or monopolise in certain situations to avoid the terror of not having a clue what to say next. Or they avoid and withdraw.

Being in the situation of listening to my manager without being able to understand what she means is quite an unnerving experience.

Perhaps we could save ourselves considerable frustration and grief at home if we try to just cut down on our words, say what we mean, mean what we say and leave out the emotion and overtones. Be clear, simple, calm and firm.

Carol Grigg.