

ASPIA Newsletter - April 2014

"Providing support to partners of adults with Asperger's Syndrome for more than 10 years"

ASPIA'S NEXT PARTNER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING:

This coming **Saturday 5 April 2014**
2pm - 5pm.

The College of Nursing,
2nd Floor, 14 Railway Parade,
Burwood (Sydney)

\$10.00 per non-member, \$5.00 per member

Presentation by Natalie Black

Topic: Similarities in Personalities & Circumstances of Neurotypical Partners.

Natalie comments: "For those who don't know me, I've been coming to ASPIA for about three and a half years, and I have recently completed my honours degree in psychology at the University of Western Sydney. Although I am not yet a qualified psychologist, Carol has invited me to speak this month and share my somewhat unique perspective, and I am happy to be able to pass on what I know both from a scientific / psychological standpoint, and from the point of view of someone who has lived an AS-NT marriage.

Over the years at ASPIA I've noticed how similar the personality traits and circumstances of neurotypical partners can be and I'd like to offer my own ideas about why that might be. I'm particularly interested in us as a group and how we can better care for ourselves and attend to our needs in our relationships. I'll also share my tips as both a client and a student on what kinds of therapeutic support is likely to help us, how to recognise unhelpful advice, and answer any questions where I can."

Please bring something to share for 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.

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 & page 2 of this newsletter for information about AS groups and support.

ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2014	
April 5	May 3
June 7	July 5
August 2	September 6
October 4	November 1
December 6	

ASPIA LUNCH CLUB

Anyone attending the support group meeting is welcome to come along earlier between 12noon & 1.30pm to join us for a coffee or bite to eat at the **LITTLE NEPAL Restaurant**

Shop C, 135 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney)
(From Burwood Station, go left & up the hill, a few shops past the Westpac Bank and then cross the road.)

Book Feature

The Partner's Guide to Asperger's Syndrome by Susan Moreno, Marci Wheeler & Kealah Parkinson (foreword by Tony Attwood). Refer to OASIS @ MAAP website.

Purchase via the following link:

<http://www.aspergersyndrome.org/Bookstore.aspx>

ASPIA's Handbook for Partner Support

This is our group's own self-published guide for partners, compiled by Carol Grigg.

For copies of this Handbook, and other recommended book titles, see our book list on the website - www.aspia.org.au

To purchase ASPIA's Handbook anonymously, go to the ASPIA website and follow the link to Lulu.

FACEBOOK

Find ASPIA's public facebook page:

ASPIA Inc (Asperger Syndrome Partner Information Australia Inc)



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

(copy & paste into your search field)

Important: Just remember that if you "like" the page, this will come up in your newsfeed and be seen by your "friends". Consider if you wish to disclose your interest in AS and ASPIA to those on your friends list.

SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS

Grief Counselling

Epping (Sydney)

Liz Pash is a Social Worker, Counsellor and Educator, with understanding of relationships affected by Asperger's Syndrome
Contact Liz on 0498 964 275 or
Email lizpash@hotmail.com

Personal Counselling for partners

By phone, skype or email.

Carol Grigg, OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA
Carol has personal experience of an AS marriage (20 years) and 13 years' experience supporting partners through ASPIA as well as attendance at countless educational workshops.

For appointments phone or text 0408 817 828
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**
Dates: 15 March, 21 June, 20 September.

Empire Bay Garden Nursery & Café,
Poole Crescent, Empire Bay
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:**

Queensland Asperger Partners' Support Group (QAPS):

Phone Helen on 0418 761 652

Email QAPS.group@gmail.com

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

Phone Sheena on 0418 790 216

Email the.taps.group@gmail.com

• **New - Tiaro, Wide Bay (Qld)**

Phone Pat on 07 4193 9239

Email davies.pat@gmail.com

• **Perth:**

Phone Roz on (08) 9284 5252

Email: rozdesk@iinet.net.au

• **Melbourne:**

Visit forum at <http://aspartneraus.org/vanilla/>
or email Melissa meraine@bigpond.net.au

• **Melbourne, also Blackburn**

<http://www.aspergersvic.org.au/partners/>

• **Adelaide:**

Phone Heike Haffer on 0431 039 136

Email heikehaffer@hotmail.com

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

2nd Saturday every month Burwood, Sydney

Registrations essential: Contact Eleanor Gittins
Ph 0408 954 358 or 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

Aspect's Adult Social Group – for adults with Asperger's or high functioning autism. Contact Caroline on 0409 603 582.

adultsocialgroup@autismspectrum.org.au

For more information:

www.autismspectrum.org.au/adultsocialgroups

Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality

Liz Dore www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com

ASTEEN - Teen social/support group

includes yahoo group. Contact Adrienne De Morais on 0413 890 311, email ademorais@optusnet.com.au or Keren Day on 0416 182 531, email kerend@live.com.au .

Further General Support Information:

There are organisations established in every State in Australia that are dedicated to providing information and support for families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders. One example is ASPECT, Autism Spectrum Australia in Sydney.

Just "google" Autism and the State you're interested in and you'll find a website with the latest local ASD news including education opportunities and campaigns.

It is still rare to find a partner group, but a direct enquiry could lead you to something.

Thought ...

Resist or Respond

The thought I want to write about today has been developing since January when I had an "aha" moment in the course of my daily life.

I recognised a dynamic that was taking place between me and a loved ASD adult in my life and I developed a theory. I then thought about every relationship I've had with any ASD individual in the past or present, related or not, and the theory was spot on in every situation.

This doesn't mean my theory is true in everyone else's situation. Debate or discussion is always good, but it's always good to put forward any ideas because there will always be someone within our partner network who will experience validation when an experience or idea is shared.

When I approach my ASD individual with a statement or request I am met with resistance.

Of course it *could* be me ☐

My statement or request has to be analyzed and approved in order to be valid. There is resistance, argument. I am shut down. The outcome is rarely approval, rather all the reasons why my need is invalid and my request unjustified. My need is therefore left unmet. I feel invalidated ... powerless ... like a vapour. I stop asking.

I think of all the characteristics that seem to go along with this analytical response - critical, "negative thinker", "glass half empty". I feel sucked dry. The light goes from my eyes.

I, on the other hand, am responsive. To every statement, request, opinion or need that is expressed. These are opportunities. Most of the partners I speak to or observe in our meetings are also responsive in nature. Open, warm, co-operative, helpful, optimistic, respectful of the opinions of others, available to the needs or requests of others. Accepting, positive and "glass half full" thinkers in many instances. Our natures just automatically respond and our motivation is to meet needs or fulfil requests if at all possible. To us, this is what relationship is all about.

One can see how we are so vulnerable to partners and also other individuals who have strongly apparent or expressed essential needs and demands. We are naturally caring and co-operative, keen to help make another person's life better if we can. We regularly defer to their needs and preferences in the belief we're helping to nurture a growing and mutually satisfying relationship. But the more we co-operate and adjust, the more we have to, there is no fulfilling the needs. It becomes a way of life. Little or no reciprocation of the care we show.

And what of ourselves do we have left? It's at this point that many partners begin to seriously seek counselling and support, and thoughts of separation begin to germinate.

It is essential that each one of us has contexts other than home where we are valued and feel credible.

We cannot allow the analysis of one to continue to define who we are or what we need.

Carol Grigg.