

ASPIA Newsletter - August 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 2 August 2014**
1.30pm for a 2pm start - 5pm.

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

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

Please bring something small
to share for afternoon tea.

Topic for this meeting

For our August meeting we are continuing
our special focus on

The emotional, practical & legal aspects of preparing to leave a relationship.

For this meeting we have a Lawyer attending
to provide us with some information from a
legal perspective.

As stated in our last newsletter, ASPIA has
always been invested in helping partners
manage & save their relationships, but it's
extremely important to also support those
who find they have to end their relationship,
as many of us have.

Non-AS partners only

ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2014

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 &
1.00pm 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.)*

Special book feature

***"The Other Half of Asperger Syndrome
(Autism Spectrum Disorder): A Guide to
Living in an Intimate Relationship with a
Partner who is on the Autism Spectrum"***
***2nd Edition by Maxine Aston (Jessica
Kingsley Publishers)***

*The Other Half of Asperger Syndrome was the
first book ever published for partners in an
Asperger relationship. In this updated second
edition, Maxine Aston draws on over a decade
of experience working with couples affected
by Asperger Syndrome. Full of bite-size
information and advice, the book explains
Asperger Syndrome, discusses whether or not
seeking an autism diagnosis will help, and
offers simple strategies for coping with a
range of relationship challenges including
communication, social, and intimacy
difficulties.*

[http://www.footprint.com.au/product-
detail.asp?product=9781849054980&ParentP
age=new-releases.asp](http://www.footprint.com.au/product-detail.asp?product=9781849054980&ParentPage=new-releases.asp)



Footprint Books are a Sydney-based book
distributor, representing leading global
publishers and offering a comprehensive
range of titles related to Asperger's
Syndrome and Autism.

(Register and receive updates on new and
upcoming releases at:

<http://www.footprint.com.au/index.asp>)

SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS

Phone Counselling for partners

Carol Grigg, OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA
Carol can provide validation for partners as well as helping partners explore ideas and options for responding to relationship challenges.

For appointments phone or text 0408 817 828

www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au

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 lizlpash@hotmail.com

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: rozskdesk@inet.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/>

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.relationshipsandprivatetestuff.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 .

Thought ...

I was privileged to attend a Tony Attwood workshop in Albury last Friday, and as usual, I've come away recharged with more information, a sense of validation and renewed passion to continue in partner support!

I thought I might just pass on some helpful gems I captured during the workshop while they are fresh in my mind and I'm still processing them. I

find that every time I hear Tony he has further refined or deepened the information he is able to share, so it was great to get a top-up.

The focus of the workshop was children and teens, but I noticed that Tony and event organizer Sue Larkey (ASD Educator, www.suelarkey.com) made more frequent comments in relation to adults and relationships this time than previously which means that much more clinical experience with adults is now coming through.

Of course there's too much to share, but some of the highlights were as follows:

Aspies have a great fear of making a mistake and don't cope well when they make mistakes

- Aspies will have a "phobic" like reaction to making a mistake
- Some will refuse to try because they believe that if you don't try you don't make a mistake
- They fear appearing stupid and being ridiculed
- They believe that mistakes prove they are stupid
- They cannot change their mind because to do so would be to admit having previously made a mistake
- "Allergic" to errors
- High expectation of their own performance
- Limited ability to tolerate frustration
- Have no Plan B (no flexibility in thinking, one-track mind)
- Less likely to seek help from someone else
- Quickly "hit the panic button"
- Intense negative emotional reaction
- Giving up quickly ends the pain

Meltdowns, emotional reactions

- Intense emotions block them from accessing self-calming strategies
- Intense emotions reduce their IQ
- They need time to calm down
- They need time to process what to do cognitively, not intuitively
- An intense emotional reaction (meltdown) can be for them like a "cleansing" or a clearing of the air, but of course everyone else around them will feel terrorized.

Communication

- Match the length of what you say to the Aspie's level of comprehension and memory

- Give one instruction at a time
- Allow them time to process

Anxiety

- Aspies typically struggle with high anxiety
- This is the reason why they tend to be controlling
- They have the belief that if they "share" they lose control
- They use passive aggression
- Create situations of emotional blackmail
- Become oppositional and defiant (will not comply)
- Can be a "terrorist" at home
- Parent (partner!) becomes a "slave", they show lack of respect and punish parent/partner if they do not do what the "master" orders
- Become intoxicated with his/her power
- Parent/partner to be calm but as assertive as is possible, be non-negotiable, be impervious to emotional blackmail
- Use hostage negotiation techniques - never lie, never promise
- Routines and rituals (an anticipated sequence) help to soothe their anxiety, and help them relax and feel calm
- The same routines and rituals can become compulsions to do in order to alleviate feeling anxious though
- Special interest is used as a thought blocker
- If denied access to the special interest when they are anxious, frustration at not being able to cope without the blocking activity turns to anger.
- Explosion or melt-down takes place, cleanses the system or clears the air
- Aspie wonders why everyone else is now distressed and upset because they're fine now!

Tony then talked about the Emotional Toolbox that he teaches on in each presentation. Things like physical exercise/outlet, relaxation, writing poetry or music etc, time with pets, talking to someone safe, using solitude, meditation, massage, sleep, special interest, reducing sensory overload, medication, etc that a person with AS can learn to use to repair their feelings and hopefully prevent meltdowns taking place. (Helpful for us to use too!)

Carol Grigg, 28 July 2014