

ASPIA NEWSLETTER

August 2015

“Providing support to partners of adults with Asperger’s Syndrome since 2003”

August Meeting

This coming Saturday 1st August

BURWOOD RSL CLUB, 96 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood (Sydney).

Time: 1.30pm for 2pm start, concludes 5pm.

Cost: \$10.00 for non-members, \$5.00 for members (membership is \$55 per year, includes library)

There is free parking on site and in the street which makes things a lot easier, although for those who come by train, it will be a bit further to walk. Basically walk past the College (former venue) and continue to the next corner and turn right into Shaftesbury Road. It’s a couple of blocks up on the left.

We will be using a meeting room on Level 1. Don’t forget the usual sign-in for clubs, and unfortunately for those who live in the Strathfield / Burwood area you will need to join the club to enter. I think it’s only \$2.00 to join the club. The rest of us can enter as temporary guests.

We are obligated to use the club facilities to purchase our refreshments, so please do not bring food to share.

Topic for this meeting:

Supporting children who have a parent (and/or sibling) on the Spectrum

Clinical Psychologist Steve Den Kaat will attend our August meeting and discuss with us the best ways we can guide and support our children who have a parent on the Spectrum (and/or a sibling).

This topic was to be the focus of our meeting in May but unfortunately Steve and his family were quite unwell with winter ills and he couldn’t make it.

Group members had requested a presentation on this topic because of the daily difficulties partners encounter raising children with an AS parent.

This meeting is not intended for children, but for us to learn how best to support our children. Please do not bring your children. At some stage in the future we will explore the possibility of holding a workshop for children who have a parent on the Spectrum.

For those who were at our July meeting we are hoping we won’t have opera singers and bagpipes taking turns to provide background music for our meeting! One of the hazards of using a facility with several functions taking place at the same time, and thin walls! We had to laugh.

ASPIA Lunch Club prior to meeting: Lunch Club is now meeting at the RSL Club too. Head for the bistro area and hopefully everyone will find each other.

Anyone attending our support group meeting is welcome to come along from about 12 noon or so to join us for a coffee or bite to eat. Then we can head upstairs to our meeting room at 1.30pm.

Dinner: The Club facility also makes it really convenient for anyone to stay on after the support group meeting and have a drink and/or some dinner together like we did after the June meeting. This is a nice way to end a great day with our ASPIA friends.

ASPIA Support Group Meeting dates for 2015		
1 August – Steve Den Kaat	5 September - Discussion	3 October – Natalie Black
7 November – Eleanor Gittins	5 December – Discussion	6 Feb 2016 – Nola Norris

ASPIA's online Yahoo discussion group

This online forum is growing and lots of great conversations are taking place. \$25.00 annual subscription. Visit ASPIA's website at www.aspia.org.au/contactus.html to join.

ASPIA's website contains information on other support groups, professionals, etc:

Helpful literature: <http://www.aspia.org.au/information.html>

Recommended Psychologists, Counsellors, etc: <http://www.aspia.org.au/professionals.html>

Other Partner Support Groups in Australia: <http://www.aspia.org.au/groups.html>

Support for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome: <http://www.aspia.org.au/groups.html>

Other support and useful links: <http://www.aspia.org.au/links.html>

Events and workshops: <http://www.aspia.org.au/events.html>

Items of interest

- **Great article on a couple we know from Brisbane**

Have a look at this great article in the Courier Mail about Helen Boardman and her husband Alan from Brisbane. Helen leads our sister-group group in Brisbane.

<http://m.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/living-with-aspergers-syndrome/story-fnn8dlfs-1227442607006>

- **New Book "My Autistic Awakening" by Rachael Lee Harris**

"A fascinating story celebrating the gorgeous diversity of humankind, and to inspire all girls & women on the autism spectrum."

Rachael is a Counsellor/Psychotherapist with Asperger's Syndrome who has a practice in Brisbane. We highly recommend her. See Rachael's website <http://rlharrispsy.com/>

- **2 Day Master Class on "Social Thinking" - Sydney – 31st Aug / 1st Sept**

Internationally renowned Michelle Garcia, developer of "Social Thinking" (teaching the thinking behind being social). The Melbourne class for 3rd & 4th September has been booked out.

Visit <http://www.spectrumspeech.com.au/workshops>

- **Free carer well-being sessions – Moss Vale SNAPS (Special Needs & Parent Support)**

“Looking after yourself while looking after others” - suitable for carers of all types.

Several stand-alone sessions, first one on 30 July. Registration essential. Contact Sophia Farrington at mossvalesnaps@gmail.com

- **Two Research Projects for us to support**

1) “An Exploratory Study of the impact of Autism Symptoms on Parenting.”

Conducted by the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University.

This research is relevant to the topic of our ASPIA meeting on 1st August. Please consider contributing to this study. Contact Natasha Kolivas on nskolivas@students.latrobe.edu.au or visit the following link: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/otarc/research/research-themes/focus-on-families>

2) “A Study about the nature of intimate relationships between people with Aspergers and their partners.”

Conducted by Macquarie University.

Please consider supporting this study to help build up the existence of empirical research on relationships affected by Asperger’s Syndrome. It’s the lack of empirical evidence that contributes to partners being disbelieved when they speak to counsellors and psychologists.

Visit https://mq.edu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_aaY4dWPvalk9jM1 or contact Naomi Millar-Powell direct at Naomi.millar-powell@students.mq.edu.au or on 0425 284 355.

Groups for adults with AS and also couples

Remember that Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates runs groups for adults with AS and also for couples, and now Psychologist Eleanor Gittins has informed us that she is once again running an adult group in Surry Hills and a couples group in Menai. Please refer to the professionals list on the aspia website for their contact details.

Some articles of interest

For quite some time now, there have been many discussions comparing Asperger’s Syndrome with Narcissistic Personality Disorder. There are so many similarities, and the effect on us is also so similar, but the difference is in the intent. However, I am providing some links here that I believe are helpful for us to read. Particularly if you call us “empaths” – those who are high on the empathy scale which most of us are.

- <http://www.elephantjournal.com/2015/06/the-toxic-attraction-between-an-empath-a-narcissist/>
- <http://www.elephantjournal.com/2015/05/loving-understanding-an-empath/>
- <http://www.aacc.net/2013/10/10/narcissism-or-aspergers-keys-to-working-with-challenging-marriages/>

Articles on other topics that may be helpful

- <http://www.boundariesbooks.com/articles/boundaries/others-resist-your-boundaries/>
- <https://www.cmlaw.com.au/blog/post/what-are-australias-child-custody-laws/>

“Thought”

Unrequited ...

That phrase “unrequited love” has been rolling around inside my head a lot lately. I had to find my dictionary to check its full meaning, and I think it matches the feelings I’ve been experiencing. So often when I’m counselling with partners I share with them what so many partners share about feeling like we’re pouring our love and our souls and our emotions and our efforts ... everything into a black hole and nothing comes back to nurture us in return. It’s quite soul destroying, and has to be linked to that feeling of “unrequited love”. Love that’s not returned or reciprocated. I know it’s a different usage, but I think it’s the same feeling or state to be in. A real sense of ineffectiveness.

Somehow we do believe our partners love us, but they just seem unable to demonstrate it or respond to us in ways that resonate with our soul-need to be actively loved and acknowledged for who we are and all the ways we show our care for them. The reciprocation we naturally expect in a marriage or long term partnership. For us, it’s why we’re in a relationship.

It was really stirred up for me recently when I was trying to find some sort of closure (again) for myself after a relationship breakdown I experienced late last year. (Yes, I chose another Aspie arrogantly thinking that with my knowledge I could make it work. 1 year of bliss. 4 of confusion and conflict. I failed. Correction - we failed.

So many unhealed painful feelings. So many meaningful words rewarded with silence. Some rewarded with rage. Having to sit with and be content with those open and raw feelings of unfinished business and “unrequited” love, care and effort is next to impossible. I want some of it, or something, back. Please.

My attempts to seek some sort of acknowledgement or empathic response are met with statements about his hardships as though it’s a competition. I need to let it go. For my own sake I need to stop seeking a response that satisfies my longing to be acknowledged, valued ... or told that I was loved. He genuinely doesn’t seem to understand the meaning of my words or what I’m seeking.

I know that my value is in no way diminished by his lack of response or acknowledgement; I know I’m a good lover and partner!

The fact is, we are all wonderful and beautiful people who are highly empathic, highly responsive, highly loving, and many more good things.

We just fell in love with beautiful human beings who cannot requite to us what we cannot help but give.

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