

# ASPIA Newsletter – May 2015

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

## **May Meeting – this coming Saturday 2nd May**

### **Topic: Supporting children who have a parent (and/or sibling) on the Spectrum**

By request of our group members, Clinical Psychologist Steve Den Kaat will attend our May 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 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.

### **Please join us at the usual time and place:**

The College of Nursing, 14 Railway Parade (2nd floor), 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)

Please bring a small plate of afternoon tea to share.

**ASPIA Lunch Club** will run as usual prior to our meeting, and anyone attending our meeting is welcome to come along earlier, between 12noon & 1.00pm to join us for a coffee or bite to eat.

Where? Little Nepal Restaurant, Shop C, 135 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney).

Directions: From Burwood Station, go left and up the hill, cross Railway Pde at the lights, continue up the hill & a few shops past the Westpac Bank cross the road.

Also, sometimes a few of us stay on for dinner afterwards at one of the many local restaurants. Makes a day of it, which can be a very welcome break. Lots of time with others who “get it”.

<b>ASPIA Support Group Meeting dates for 2015</b>		
<b>2 May</b>	6 June	4 July
1 August	5 September	3 October
7 November	5 December	

**May is Membership Renewal month.** I will contact members by separate email in mid-May.

### **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](http://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>

### **New Venue mid-year**

Please continue to help us find a new meeting venue. Something in the same area of Sydney would be great, close to public transport and low-cost. Sometimes it’s word of mouth ...

### **Other up-coming events of interest**

**Sydney - July 17, 2015.** Tony Attwood and Michelle Garnett will be presenting a full day workshop on Girls and Women with Asperger's Syndrome. *"The seminar is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of the female presentation of Asperger's syndrome (AS) and share strategies and ideas found to be useful in clinical practice."* Visit [www.mindsandhearts.net](http://www.mindsandhearts.net) for further information and to register.

**Sydney (Epping) – July 23, 2015.** Tony Attwood and Speech Pathologist Bronwyn Sutton will be presenting a full-day workshop on "The App Guide to Emotions and Autism", focus on children and teens 4 – 17 years. Visit [www.learningappguide.com](http://www.learningappguide.com) for more information.

### **Research Project through Macquarie University**

***"A Study about the nature of intimate relationships between people with Aspergers and their partners."***

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

### **Thought ...**

I have to admit that this past month I've felt a little empty of words.

I do keep remembering snippets from our workshop though so I will share another one here.

Tony shared with us that for there to be any hope of change or improvement in our relationships, our AS partners must at least make some acknowledgement that there is a problem and be motivated to learn. He said that it is not necessary to achieve a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, but there must be some acknowledgement of and willingness to learn about AS.

Many partners find that their AS partner completely refuses to acknowledge or discuss the matter. And many find that if they try to push it, the reaction or meltdown is not worth it.

Where does this leave us? In many ways, the AS adult's response is strategic for them because it ensures they can maintain their position. Perhaps this gives you the freedom and right to choose your own position in response? I really think the only way to make a shift is to stop talking and trying to explain the problem (which they often take as a personal attack), and just start "doing". Not with malice or retaliation, just purposeful action.

Choose your responses. Act. Calmly and firmly, without any fanfare. Stop waiting for neurotypical responses from them. Say what you are going to do and do it. Use logic, "cause and effect". Remind yourself of your own values and begin to live in a way that is true to yourself. It will take some courage. Make some ultimatums or trade-offs with your partner, one at a time. You do not have to tolerate bad behaviour. It is ok to leave the room or leave the house. In general it is futile trying to reason with them. Save your energy, acknowledge your reality, choose your response and follow through. Take your time. In many ways it will be like a conditioning process and in time you may find you've achieved more than you thought you could. Always seek professional help or make sure someone knows whether you're ok or not.

Carol Grigg OAM, Dip Counselling

President, ASPIA Inc

Just a reminder about my latest article "Crucial Communication Clues" which is available for \$5.00. Includes lots of "dot" points, discussion guide and worksheets.

[www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au/information.html](http://www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au/information.html)