

# **ASPIA NEWSLETTER**

## **November 2015**

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

### **November Meeting**

#### **This coming Saturday 7th November**

**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 and Speaker for this meeting:**

One of our most highly recommended Psychologists **Eleanor Gittins** will be attending our November meeting and presenting for us.

Eleanor’s presentations are always highly educational and informative, with lots of “aha” moments experienced by partners.

For this meeting Eleanor will tackle the issue of motivation that is problematic in all of our situations.

This is her title: **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation - What is the difference?**

Eleanor will also be ready with answers to any questions.

Looking forward to a great meeting.

**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.

<b>Remaining 2015 ASPIA Support Group Meeting dates</b>	
<b>7 November – Eleanor Gittins</b>	5 December – Discussion/AGM/Party
First meeting for 2016 - 6 Feb – 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](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>

### **Book Recommendations**

- **Marriage and Lasting Relationships with Asperger's Syndrome** (Autism Spectrum Disorder) by Eva A Mendes (foreword by Stephen M Shore), publisher Jessica Kingsley Publishers – available through Footprint Books [www.footprint.com.au](http://www.footprint.com.au)

### **Reminder: Groups available for adults with AS and also couples**

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.

### **Recommended article by partners in our forum and facebook groups - providing "lightbulb" moments:**

[http://www.sacramentoasis.com/docs/8-22-03/core\\_deficits.pdf](http://www.sacramentoasis.com/docs/8-22-03/core_deficits.pdf)

### **"Thought"**

#### **Colluding with the Delusion**

For better or for worse, a very strong thread that runs through our support work is the need to be understanding of our partners in relation to their AS characteristics and difficulties. The truth of the matter is, this mostly means that we have to be the stronger, more accommodating human being in the situation, and go without the consideration and accommodation that rightfully should be ours too in a partnership or marriage relationship with another human being of equal status. But this is the nature of it.

We "get" that the AS person has so many limitations in areas we are so natural in, and of course we can feel considerable compassion for their struggles and deficits when we see

how stressed they can become in work, home or social settings, until we are reminded of how stressed we have become trying to stage manage home life every moment of every day to avoid the AS partner going into shutdown or meltdown and the consequent disastrously stressful impact this has on the relationship, on the family, on us!

That long-winded introduction was heading somewhere ...

I was thinking how extremely sensitive the AS partner is to any hint or whiff of criticism, to the point that they read criticism or personal attack into innocent statements that are just factual about whatever is taking place at the time, or for the purpose of making some sort of arrangement or improvement to household functioning or relationship quality for the benefit of all. It's called "family life" actually.

I thought of the word "collude", how they seem to draw us into colluding with them in their belief that they are without error, that their perspective is correct, that their way is best, that they are a more advanced human being who we are privileged to be able to learn from. We find ourselves rehearsing every word, every phrase, every statement, every conversation before we speak it to purge it of any taint of criticism or judgment or attack, to the point we just can't speak or deal with anything for fear of bursting their bubble.

And that's how I think they like it, or in fact need it to be. There is only room for one reality to exist.

Perhaps they have arrived at their position and perspective as a result of having felt different throughout the formative years when social acceptance and inclusion were everyone else's priorities, but they couldn't achieve this, and so they had to become confident in whatever skill or strength they had in order to create an identity of their own. Still different. But typically using a skill or gift that has been more highly developed than any non-AS person can achieve. One that sets them above as well as apart. One can understand this happening, their reliance on their superiority in a particular field as a "shoring up" of identity.

But as patient and sacrificing partners, we struggle every day with this apparent arrogance they portray and our own sense of powerlessness to influence them to consider our perspective, comment or suggestion as valid or acceptable, and so we become silent. Or eventually leave. No other option seems available to us.

What is even more horrifying and disabling for us is the requirement on our part to patiently endure being corrected, directed, criticized and often rudely spoken to regularly by our AS partners, sometimes constantly, as they work on forming us into more complete and tolerable partners for themselves.

While we weather the torpedo blasts of rage and reaction they direct towards us if we suggest an imperfection in them.

Survivable? I think not.

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