

ASPIA NEWSLETTER - April 2016

Next ASPIA partner support group meeting:

This coming Saturday 2nd April

AT: THE RUGBY BAR, CLUB BURWOOD, 97 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney)

This is **NOT the RSL Club** in Shaftesbury Road, although it is in their group of clubs.

Club Burwood is a smaller club, and is on the corner of George Street, just a short walk down the hill from the railway station. **The Rugby Bar is downstairs.**

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)

PARKING:

The best option for our March meeting was the **Wilson carpark in John Street behind the Club. \$4 daily rate for weekends.** Plenty of available spaces. There are other options, but mostly metered or too far away.

LUNCH CLUB is at the Club (from 12noon), and drinks/dinner after the meeting for those who can stay on. There is great benefit in getting to know each other informally over dinner or drinks.

What's happening at our APRIL meeting?

Special Presentation introducing a Law firm offering an alternative approach to separation and divorce settlement.

Our support group meetings constantly expose a need for reliable and supportive information for those who need to consider separation and divorce. No-one is an expert at separating or divorcing, and for those in a relationship with someone on the Spectrum it can be particularly daunting, difficult, complicated and often adversarial, leading to many partners feeling they can't even consider it. We certainly need professional guidance before we embark on this pathway, and sometimes hearing the facts can help us feel a little less powerless.

We have David and Steven from DIVORCE PARTNERS coming to talk to us about the new concept their firm of professionals have for supporting couples who need to separate and divorce.

Their approach is to offer support for the couple rather than both partners seeking independent legal advice which typically sets up an adversarial and expensive process. Divorce Partners present statistic based information to the couple, designed to encourage realistic attitudes towards possible settlement outcomes.

I am aware that many partners have had difficulty with an AS partner refusing to acknowledge the contribution of the non-AS partner and pursuing settlement through the Court at great cost to both partners. Some AS partners have very unrealistic views on settlement and may have picked up false information along the way that they insist is true.

If AS partners are presented with facts and statistics in the first place, perhaps they may see the logic in following the non-adversarial and more cost-effective pathway that Divorce Partners are presenting.

As well as presenting their new practice, David and Steven will answer any questions we may have. They have been educating themselves on AS in relationships, thanks to yours truly.

Have a look at their website: www.divorcepartners.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/divorcepartners

ASPIA Support Group Meeting Dates for 2016		
6 February	5 March	2 April
7 May	4 June	2 July
6 August	3 September	1 October
5 November	3 December	

ASPIA's online Yahoo discussion group

Lots of great conversations taking place in an email style. \$25.00 subscription. Visit ASPIA's website at www.aspia.org.au/contactus.html to request to join. The forum is becoming a great place to discuss sensitive stuff that can't be published in newsletters, etc.

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

1) Last month I recommended the following book, which I continue to do:

Asperger's From the Inside Out: A Supportive and Practical Guide for Anyone with Asperger's Syndrome by **Michael John Carley**

<http://www.amazon.com/Aspergers-From-Inside-Out-AspergersSyndrome/dp/0399533974>

2) Michael has just published a new book which is selling very fast.

Unemployed on the Autism Spectrum: How to cope productively with the effects of unemployment and Jobhunt with Confidence. Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Should be available through Footprint Books in Sydney. www.footprint.com.au

3) Also, John Elder Robison, Author of "Look me in the Eye" has published a new book which is also selling well:

Switched On: A Memoir of Brain Change and Emotional Awakening

<http://www.amazon.com/Switched-On-Memoir-Emotional-Awakening/dp/0812996895>

Sydney Groups available for adults with AS and also couples

Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates runs groups for adults with AS and also for couples, and Psychologist Eleanor Gittins is 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.

Repeated from last Newsletter: We have been asked to advertise or participate in two research studies:

1) One is “The Australian Longitudinal study of adults with Autism Spectrum Conditions” through FACS and UNSW. This one includes carers or family members.

<https://promo-manager.server-secure.com/em/message/email/view.php?id=716546&u=1010144>

2) The other is on “Interoception” through the University of Southern Queensland, and seems to be just aimed at adults on the spectrum.

The purpose of the research is to better understand how adults on the Autism spectrum perceive and interpret internal bodily sensations - feelings that include hunger, thirst, temperature, fullness, pain, taste, itch, heartbeat, air hunger and pleasant touch.

If you are over 18 and have been diagnosed with ASD and are interested in taking part in the research, please click on the link below for more details:

<http://www.aspergersvic.org.au/research-requests/2016/2/9/university-of-southern-queensland-interoception-research.html>

“Thought”

In my counselling and personal experience I've begun to be aware of a subset of AS partners who perform very highly in the job description of partner as though they must be applying themselves to it as a special interest. We've heard of some who've made their partner their special interest (long-term) with a high level of adulation and attention (maybe stifling) but still don't connect emotionally in any consistent way, but I hadn't focused previously on some who actually make it their business to be the best partner anyone can have, leaving no grounds for anyone to fault them. They have it covered. Except the partner still feels so alone and emotionally empty. Many practical and physical needs are well catered for, solutions are swiftly provided to meet any difficulty, but the partner still feels invisible as an actual soul with feelings and emotional needs.

The performance may be flawless, but it's still superficial, just ticking the boxes, like making moves on a chess board. Very deliberately it would seem. Partners report feeling like their partner heads them off at the pass constantly. Like all their needs have been analysed and predicted, with solutions applied before they can even think let alone open their mouths to ask. And how dare they ask or have a need that hasn't been catered for already. Maybe there are other factors in these situations. There's an awareness and a capacity to perform that many Aspies don't seem to have, but nevertheless I've heard it enough now to want to include it in what I write about. Emotional intimacy, closeness and connection are still missing, but most other bases are covered in a way that leaves no ground for complaint. A great deal of intelligence is being applied here.

In a couple of these situations the relationship has actually been ended by the AS partner when the non-AS partner persisted in asking for emotional intimacy and change, or questioning the AS partner's performance in any way. Seems the preferred path may be to leave rather than acknowledge an inadequacy or a need that he/she has no solution for.

Carol Grigg OAM
Dip Counselling

I provide phone and skype counselling for partners who need to talk. Please see my website www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au