

# ASPIA NEWSLETTER - August 2016

## Next ASPIA partner support group meeting:

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August

**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 is the **John Street car park behind the Club (Wilson parking). \$4 daily rate for weekends.** Plenty of available spaces. Other options are 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 AUGUST meeting?**

For August, we are blessed to welcome **Psychologist Eleanor Gittins** who has been a long-time supporter of ASPIA's work. Eleanor is on ASPIA's list of highly recommended professionals for counselling and psychological support for partners, couples and individuals with ASD. Her practice is at Illawong, in the Shire district of southern Sydney.

Eleanor has provided some amazing education to ASPIA members at our meetings over the years on how the AS brain is different and what the differences mean, especially in relationship dynamics.

Eleanor is attending our August meeting to answer questions and facilitate a discussion time in response to the needs of those attending. Please bring your questions and scenarios to the discussion and enjoy the opportunity to draw on Eleanor's wisdom and experience.

(Additional Note: Bring something warm to put on during the meeting. The air conditioning in the Rugby Bar is freezing.)

<b>ASPIA Support Group Meeting Dates for 2016</b>		
	6 August	3 September
1 October	5 November	3 December

### **Partner support group in Port Macquarie**

Third Thursday of the month, 10am – 12noon, Port Macquarie Town Library.  
Contact Meredith on 0428 904 007 or email [meredithllew@gmail.com](mailto:meredithllew@gmail.com)

### **Reminder about Divorce Partners who provided an informative session in our April meeting.**

Divorce Partners offer low-cost settlement negotiation packages for couples who hope to avoid the horrendous cost and adversarial experience of lawyers and the Family Court Process.

Their business is growing and they have representatives in most major cities now.

Website: [www.divorcepartners.com.au](http://www.divorcepartners.com.au) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/divorcepartners](http://www.facebook.com/divorcepartners)

**New Book – highly recommended – cites Nola's work and acknowledges ASPIA!**

Title: ***“Teaching university students with autism spectrum disorder: A guide to developing academic capacity and proficiency”*** by Kimberley McMahon-Coleman and Kim Draisma.

Jessica Kingsley Publishers, available from Footprint Books [www.footprint.com.au](http://www.footprint.com.au) (located in Warriewood, Sydney)

We are excited to recommend this book because it cites Nola's work (Nola Norris, ASPIA Presenter and web developer), is endorsed by Tony Attwood and also acknowledges ASPIA in the introductory pages!

Nola comments as follows:

*“The book is very practical and easy-to-read. The authors address 3 target audiences:*

- 1. University learning developers (lecturers who work with students across all faculties to develop the academic skills they need to be successful at university - students with ASD comprise one of the largest groups who are referred for help),*
- 2. University lecturers, who need information about the learning needs of their students with ASD, and*
- 3. University students with ASD.*

*Because it is easy to read, it will also be helpful for parents and partners who want to understand the issues surrounding their family member's participation in university education. This is a seriously helpful book and would be a valuable addition to the ASPIA library.”*

Nola is presenting at ASPIA's September meeting and will review the book for us then.

**Special Request**

From time to time we have partners in desperate need of short-term respite or safety. If you have a spare room and time to offer occasional support in this way, please let Carol know by email. Being aware of boarding availability could be helpful to us too. Also, if you're aware of accommodation within or near Sydney where ASPIA could hold a retreat, please let us know.

**ASPIA's online Yahoo discussion group – now offering a separate forum for men with female partners**

We've been receiving more enquiries from men who need a safe place to talk, so we've established a new ASPIA forum for them. \$25.00 subscription for either forum.

Visit ASPIA's website at [www.aspia.org.au/contactus.html](http://www.aspia.org.au/contactus.html) to request to join – Carol will email you with instructions once she receives notification of your payment.

The forum is a great place to discuss sensitive stuff that can't be published in newsletters, etc, and with an option for men now, more needs can be met more effectively.

**ASPIA's website contains lots of helpful information sheets, plus information on other support groups, professionals, links, etc: <http://www.aspia.org.au>**

**Sydney Groups available for adults with AS and also couples**

Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates runs groups for adults with AS and also for couples.

Psychologist Eleanor Gittins is running a couples group in Menai.

Please refer to the professionals list on the [aspia](http://www.aspia.org.au) website for their contact details.

**Research Study by Bronwyn Wilson (continuing for remainder of 2016).**

**Good responses coming in - please contribute if at all possible.**

Bronwyn says: **“The purpose of this study is to explore communication patterns and resulting difficulties that can occur in the close relationships of adults with Asperger's Syndrome”.**

Bronwyn previously researched the need for prompting in AS adults, and presented her findings at an ASPIA meeting, which were very interesting and helpful.

If you can help with her next survey, please follow this link:

[https://ecuau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_6sNVH8l0WgVQsPH](https://ecuau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6sNVH8l0WgVQsPH)

(Please click on the final “arrow” in the survey so your answers are recorded).

**Survey Results**

In our last couple of newsletters we were asking for partners to respond to a survey of **“NT life experiences with ASD partner”**. The survey has now closed, with results available via a link from the home page of [www.theneurotypical.com](http://www.theneurotypical.com)

**Thought**

Care when you're ill

I'm becoming increasingly concerned at how many stories I've been hearing where partners are actually ignored, neglected and even targeted with ridicule or malicious attitudes and words by their AS partners when they're ill. It just leaves me speechless and traumatised to hear about the lack of care that so many partners live with. In fact, it's inhumane. Sadly, a very negative manifestation of ASD deficits, though thankfully not in every situation.

Encouragingly, I have heard some stories where the AS partner actually behaved better and more caring when their partner was ill, as though they knew or could learn the script for caring for someone who was ill, even if they didn't show adequate care for their partner when they weren't ill.

Once again, we seem to be observing the benefits of good early role-modelling, or the establishment of a pattern early on in life that has equipped them to be able to fill a caring role when a partner or loved one is ill. Some have been willing to learn how to fill a caring role. How we wish this capacity could be generalised to daily care in a normal reciprocal relationship with a partner who is well.

But getting back to the concern that led me to writing this thought. Perhaps by writing about this in a “thought”, those partners who are neglected and even attacked when they are ill will feel acknowledged and validated. These “thoughts” that I write are often useful for validating the most painful and confusing aspects of our experiences. Perhaps these thoughts can also be useful for uniting partners in heart, with thoughts of care and kindness for one another.

How wonderful would it be to have a “refuge” or a place for respite where partners could care for one another, and especially at times when the neglect at home is extreme or severe to the point of being dangerous.

Carol Grigg OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA Level 2

I provide phone and skype counselling for partners who need to talk. Please see my website [www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au](http://www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au)