

ASPIA NEWSLETTER - February 2016

Our best wishes for a year of growth and hope for everyone!

Next meeting - this coming Saturday 6th February

NEW VENUE

Burwood Library & Community Hub, Sheppard Room, Level 1

2 Conder Street (corner Railway Parade), 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)

As this is our first meeting at this venue, we are unsure of the parking facility. For those coming by train, walk to the right (westerly direction) from the station along Railway parade.

Lunch Club venue to be confirmed. Please enquire by email later in the week.

Please note: This new venue may not be ongoing so please watch out for another venue change in the next newsletter. When I composed this newsletter I had been led to believe that the Sheppard Room would be available for all of our meetings for the year but it isn’t. Bit unsettling, but I’m in the middle of working things out with Burwood Council now about another possible venue.

What’s happening at our February meeting?

“Making sense of Asperger syndrome” – presented by Nola Norris

Understanding some of the features of Asperger syndrome (AS) is an important step towards making sense of our experience as partners of people with AS. Nola’s presentation will trace the development of thinking about AS by sharing some findings from autism research and the ways this helps her to make sense of her own experience day-to-day. Three important areas that will be covered are:

- Wing’s Triad
- Central coherence
- Enhanced perceptual functioning and sensory sensitivities

Biography

Nola has enjoyed a diverse career in education, having worked in schools (primary and secondary) in both the public and private sectors, and in universities.

Nola completed her PhD thesis: ‘**A new perspective on thinking, memory and learning in gifted adults with Asperger syndrome**’ in 2014. Prior to working full-time on her doctorate, Nola was ICT Integration Coordinator at a large K-12 independent school, responsible for professional development of teachers. During this time, the diagnosis of her husband with Asperger syndrome led to the desire to understand the cognitive profile and learning needs of gifted students with Asperger syndrome. Nola’s research led to the development of a conceptual framework for teachers, to develop their understanding of the unique learning profile of these twice-exceptional learners.

Nola was a recipient of a Non Government Super Scholarship Award in 2011 which funded a study tour to the USA, was awarded the Highly Commended Research Award from the Teachers’ Guild of NSW in 2012 and was the recipient of an Australian Post-graduate Award in 2012-2013. She was made an Honorary Fellow of the Teachers’ Guild of NSW in October 2015.

(Nola is also ASPIA’s wonderful Web Developer!)

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 (repeated from last year)

- **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

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.

"Thought"

A common thread in most of my conversations with partners seems to be the Aspie's capacity for criticism and negativity and the impact on us as we live with this day in and day out.

At our workshop with Tony Attwood in March 2015 someone in the audience asked Tony if people on the Spectrum are normally pessimistic or is it from childhood trauma and issues. Tony's answer was that pessimism, negativity, "glass half empty", etc seem to "come with the territory" of being AS.

It seems that many adults on the spectrum compulsively focus on what's not complete or correct and compulsively need to correct it.

Rather soul destroying when the subject of constant criticism and correction is us.

Carol Grigg OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA level 2

I am now providing Counselling Services in Sydney, as well as phone and skype

Please see my website www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au