

ASPIA NEWSLETTER - November 2016

Next ASPIA partner support group meeting: Saturday 5th November

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 NOVEMBER meeting?

We will welcome **Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates** to our group to answer questions and facilitate discussion. And, as is customary, Jeroen will share with us his latest insights and gems of wisdom to help build our understanding of how Aspergers is affecting our relationships, and also to inspire us in our self-care efforts.

Jeroen has been an intrinsic part of the learning of our group since before we began formal meetings in 2003. He has a no-nonsense approach, telling it like it is, which is what most of us who attend meetings are seeking.

Jeroen is available for partner and couple counselling – see the ASPIA website for his details.

(Additional Note: Bring something warm to put on during the meeting just in case. The air conditioning in the Rugby Bar is inconsistent and can be freezing, although it seems of late it has been too warm.)

ASPIA Support Group Meeting Dates for remainder of 2016	
5 November	3 December
Meeting Dates for 2017	
January – No meeting	4 February
4 March	1 April
6 May	3 June
1 July	5 August
2 September	7 October
4 November	2 December

RECENT NEWS AND ITEMS

Meetup – for partners

ASPIA has created a Meetup Group to increase our social profile and help us stay in touch better. We have called it Sydney Partners of Adults with Asperger's Syndrome (ASPIA), and it is a closed group, meaning people need to apply to join. Please follow the link, and click on "join us". <https://www.meetup.com/Sydney-Partners-of-Adults-with-Aspergers-Syndrome-ASPIA/>

Face Blindness

On Channel 7's Sunday Night program last weekend they did a story on face blindness or Prosopagnosia. Many would have watched it. One of our members has sent through the link to the online Face Memory Test (by Dr Ramina Palermo). It has to be done on a computer screen, not a mobile device. The link is - <https://sites.google.com/site/drrominapalermo/face-memory-test>

Interesting article shared on facebook:

Some of us have heard the term "gaslighting", but many of us have not been quite sure what it means. It may be that some of us have experienced this in our relationships. Most of us seem to have had our reality discredited by our partners, and we end up confused and uncertain. The following article may prove helpful.

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/08/things-wish-known-gaslighting/>

New Book: About an Aspie marriage and neurodiverse family.

"When Herscue Met Jomphrey and Other Tales from an Aspie Marriage" by Herscue Bergenstreiml.

The book is published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers and available through Footprint Books www.footprint.com.au. There is also an author's blog associated with the book: <http://atthebergenstreimls.blogspot.com.au/>

Older news and items

Reminder about Divorce Partners who 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.

Website: www.divorcepartners.com.au Facebook: www.facebook.com/divorcepartners

ASPIA's online Yahoo discussion group – we have one main group for anyone with an AS partner, and then a smaller group for men with an AS partner. \$25.00 subscription for either.

Visit ASPIA's website at www.aspia.org.au/contactus.html to request to join – Carol will email you with instructions once she receives notification of your payment. Please indicate which group you prefer to be a part of.

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 website for their contact details.

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

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".

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

https://ecuau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6sNVH8I0WgVQsPH

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

Thought

Being “un” diagnosed

I want to talk about diagnosis in this newsletter thought. A few things have contributed to my reasons for this. One is our last meeting that raised some interesting points for me, and another is an incident I'm aware of where an AS partner has been “un” diagnosed by an ignorant psychologist.

In our last meeting, some of our presenter's comments indicated that the younger generation of individuals with AS are a lot more open to diagnosis and intervention. In fact, many have no choice now because their differences and difficulties are being recognized much younger in life, and early intervention is encouraged because it does make a difference, a very big difference. In fact, parents take them to therapy, and are involved in their therapy because it's a family matter and the psychologists need the family on board.

It became apparent as our meeting progressed that our presenter was surprised at how resistant and difficult our adult partners can be. Validating in some ways, but another eye opener about how these younger adults with AS are giving a misleading impression to psychologists who haven't experienced or are not open to accepting that there is a more resistant, arrogant representation of AS in older adults that we are experiencing in our relationships.

This also highlights how important our “ASPIA recommended” psychologists are because most of them know the particular characteristics of older adults on the spectrum, and how they can use their intellect and knowledge to seduce professionals into thinking it's the other partner who is the problem.

The incident I'm aware of where an older guy with AS has been “un” diagnosed, this particular adult has had many years to learn about AS and how to present himself in a very convincing way. He is highly intelligent, convinced of the validity of his own perspective, articulate, an expert at rationalizing, and doesn't see his own capacity for cunning when he wants his own way. The psychologist appears to have used screening instruments rather than psychometric assessment tests, and he did not approach this guy's adult children for input. One can understand that an ex-partner could be viewed as “hostile” and unable to be objective, but adult children who have a relatively positive relationship with their father should be respected and included in the diagnostic process, if the motivation for the re-assessment was genuinely about how to be a better person and father.

We know that adults with AS tend to have a weak sense of self or identity, are limited in their ability to see themselves through the eyes of others, don't recognize the impact they have on those around them, and have difficulty with self-reflecting and self-reporting. So, the question is, how can anyone with AS receive a valid diagnosis without input from the people who have lived with them and experienced them continuously over many years? Is that what you call a rhetorical question?

Enough from me, for now ...

Carol Grigg OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA

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