

ASPIA NEWSLETTER - October 2016

Next ASPIA partner support group meeting: Saturday 1st October

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 OCTOBER meeting?

We will welcome **Psychologist Anthony Warren** to our group to answer questions and facilitate discussion. He will also provide an introduction to the mechanisms of mindfulness, and include a 15 minute mindfulness practice session.

Anthony has provided some biographical info below, but additionally, ASPIA owes much gratitude to Anthony who was working for ASPECT (formerly NSW Autism Association) back in the days when ASPIA was forming (2002-2003). Anthony provided an opportunity for us to announce ASPIA's launch at an ASPECT expo, and personally wrote a letter of endorsement which enabled us to secure room hire, etc, to start us off. We invited and featured Anthony at our 10 year anniversary celebrations in 2013, along with several other psychologists who've supported our journey, and are grateful to him for his part in our valuable history.

Anthony provides the following information: *"Anthony Warren is a psychologist and special educator who has worked for around 40 years in various government, non-government and private practice roles. Outcomes in regard to ASD have included contributing to: the establishment of diagnostic assessment and outreach services, national guidelines for diagnostic assessment by physicians, and the provision of early identification and intervention services for families in regional and remote parts of NSW. He has led research investigating the wellbeing and support needs of adults and their families.*

Anthony currently works part-time in private practice across the age range with a focus on long term social connection, emotional and behavioural awareness and regulation, and general wellbeing. Particular interests in working with the person, their family and services include: specific developmental needs, pro-active positive behaviour support, social interaction skills, perspective taking, anxiety management, and repetitive behaviours."

It is a privilege to welcome Anthony to our meeting for October. Anthony will welcome questions about his approaches, focus and interests, and the techniques he uses when working with adults with ASD and their families

(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.)

ASPIA Support Group Meeting Dates for remainder of 2016		
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

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 Facebook: www.facebook.com/divorcepartners

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 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 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

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

Expressions of Interest, please

Quite often in our informal conversations many of us talk about the possibility of having a weekend retreat sometime.

If anyone would be interested in this, can arrange to get the weekend away, and can afford it, please let me know by email, so we can consider planning one. Carol.

The following link to a very interesting article on figurative language processing in ASD has been sent to us by one of our members:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4330886/>

Thought

Recently I was reminded of that feeling of being like in a head-lock when negotiating the daily happenings of life with a partner with Aspergers. The term "Aspie-lock" just occurred to me as fitting for how I felt.

Things might seem to be going along ok, and the level of effort we're putting in is second to none, but one is acutely aware of how delicate the balance is. One carelessly spoken word, or badly timed question or request, a suggestion of something new or different, a role or task not completed on time or in the right way, a preference or need not anticipated, a different opinion voiced, and everything comes crashing down like a house of cards. Angry reactions, blame, resistance, a meltdown, rage; or withdrawal and silence. Everything collapses, and we find ourselves instantly switching modes to that of dodging verbal missiles and criticism, trying to reason with them, trying to cajole or appease, trying to defend ourselves or our motives, explain what actually happened, justify our mistake or unintended inconsideration, and desperately trying to restore the status quo, and that state of pseudo-peace. Typically to no avail, or perhaps briefly, until next time ...

Clearly, we know what's required to keep the status quo, and we do a pretty good job of it, demonstrating our good theory of mind, and empathy. We care about our partners, we know how they think and what's important to them; we care about the relationship, and the family dynamic, wanting to keep things as positive and functioning as well as possible. But it's so nerve wracking and limiting, and completely unnatural to have to constantly work so hard to maintain the status quo, and peace. Not to mention exhausting. And disheartening and defeating when it collapses so quickly and easily. Often every day.

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