

ASPIA

Providing support to partners of adults with Asperger's Syndrome since 2003

ASPIA Newsletter – May 2018

 Our next ASPIA partner support group meeting will be this coming **Saturday 5th May** and our Presenter will be **Clinical Psychologist Jeroen Decates**. Please join us from 1.30pm for a 2.00pm start.

Jeroen is well known to the group as he has been presenting at our meetings, counselling with our members and contacts, and running groups related to Asperger's Syndrome for 15 years. From his clinical experience he is constantly developing new insights into Asperger's Syndrome in relationships, and for our May meeting he will share his insights with us, answer our questions and provide the education, guidance and support for partners that he does so well.

A little biographical information: Jeroen is a Clinical Psychologist who offers a "Neurodiversity Friendly Practice". He has degrees in Psychology and Social Sciences from the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands, practicing Psychology in the Netherlands from 1976 and moving to Australia in 1982. In 2014 Jeroen retired from Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Health Service's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service where he had worked mostly in the position of Senior Clinical Psychologist for over 28 years.

Jeroen has developed his own model of conceptualising the AS condition. This pragmatic model has been developed over many years' learning from working with his clients and their partners/families. Jeroen uses many anecdotes to highlight his work with ASD people and their families.

Jeroen now runs his own practice "the WaterShed" in Hornsby, and in 2017 began offering sessions in the Zed Three Specialist Centre in Canberra.

Jeroen's Hornsby practice is at: Suite 2/284 Peats Ferry Road, Hornsby NSW 2077, Phone (02) 8911 1164, email info@jdpsy.org

The Zed Three Clinic in Canberra is at: 173 Strickland Crescent, Deakin ACT 2600. Please phone the Zed Three Clinic direct for appointments with Jeroen there: (02) 6109 8830.

ASPIA meeting location: Club Burwood at 97 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney) (corner George Street)

Who can attend: Partners and family members seeking support from the non-Asperger perspective.

Cost: \$10 for non-members, \$5 for members (membership is \$55 per year and includes several benefits including borrowing books from the library and being part of a private facebook group.)

Parking: The cheapest and closest parking is directly behind the Club in **John Street**. Wilson car park - \$5.

Lunch Club: Bistro area from 12 noon for those who'd like to chat over lunch before the meeting.

Dinner: Staying back afterwards for a drink or dinner has become popular.

ASPIA's remaining Meeting Dates for 2018

ASPIA

Providing support to partners of adults with Asperger's Syndrome since 2003

- May 5
- June 2
- July 7
- August 4
- September 1
- October 6
- November 3
- December 1

Other ways you can stay in touch with ASPIA

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Aspia-Inc-Asperger-Syndrome-Partner-Information-Australia-Inc-293809577377381/>

Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/Sydney-Partners-of-Adults-with-Aspergers-Syndrome-ASPIA/>

Yahoo: We have an online discussion forum (\$25 subscription) – see our website www.aspia.org.au

Email: info@aspia.org.au

Website: please visit our website for information and articles, recommended professionals, and a range of other information and useful contacts and links – www.aspia.org.au

Thought

This Newsletter for May is the first I have written for 2018, and I apologise for the missing months. ASPIA has continued strongly however, with very well attended meetings, and wonderful presentations.

My silence became necessary for just a little while so I could focus on my own health and well-being as I too, like so many other partners or ex-partners of adults with AS, succumbed to some health complaints related to long-term stress. And then on December 23rd I lost my closest cousin to a brief and savage battle with melanoma. The passing of someone still so full of life and earthly value to many is a tragedy, and one I am still feeling deeply. I will write about my cousin Stuart and his significance in my personal journey, and therefore ASPIA, in another Newsletter when I have just a little more emotional strength to go there.

For this month's thought though I just couldn't pass up an opportunity to share a few of the gems that Natalie enriched us with in our April meeting.

Natalie's concern for partners is the "emotional labour" we all undertake within our relationships. We carry out a caregiver role for our partners, constantly adapting ourselves to meet their needs, suppressing our own emotional responses, enduring un-met needs of our own, and all on a never-ending basis.

Whilst our caring keeps the relationship going, we find ourselves living further and further removed from our own personal values and sense of authenticity, and long term this leads to a deterioration of health and well-being.

Natalie spoke at length again on the influence our own early attachment style to our primary caregiver may have had in why we are prepared to work so hard, much harder than we should have to, for love and validation, etc in our relationships.

Natalie's gentle encouragement is for us to begin to let go of some of the caretaking tasks we do and seek to re-claim aspects of self away from our partners' presence. Getting out and doing stuff for ourselves will help us stop feeling like we've given up everything for the other person. She stated that AS partners benefit greatly from the caring role we take in their lives, and she assured us that even

ASPIA

Providing support to partners of adults with Asperger's Syndrome since 2003 though AS partners don't like change, they tend to cope when they have to, and we need to let the ball be in their court a little more often. She also reminded us not to emotionally invest in any meltdowns that may occur.

Of course there were many other ideas Natalie shared with us, but I've just tried to bring through some key thoughts. For a take-home task, Natalie suggested exploring our own core values to help us work towards recovering our sense of authenticity (Core values exercise see <http://taproot.com/archives/37771>) .

My best wishes to all, Carol Grigg OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA,
www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au