



Families that once stood strong and proud, have experienced **erosion of resilience and capacity** due to the **presence of unidentified** characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome within an **adult member of the family**



How ?

- communication difficulties impede negotiation and conflict resolution, leading to confusion, frustration and fractured relationships;
- attempts to secure help have been met with disbelief;
- stress and exhaustion for both partners;
- mental health problems for both partners, particularly chronic anxiety and depression;
- as personal or family demands increase, adult with Asperger's Syndrome may either begin to exert more control within the household or lose the capacity or will to sustain responsibilities, placing greater strain on the partner;
- possible loss of employment or employment opportunities;
- social isolation;

Improved Awareness within Care Systems may help prevent Family Breakdown



How ?

- By **earlier detection** of Asperger's Syndrome in adult member of family;
- By **earlier provision** of supports for adults affected by Asperger's Syndrome and their families.



Barriers to receiving help

- family doesn't know about Asperger's Syndrome;
- they can't adequately describe what is taking place in the family situation;
- they fear they won't be believed;
- adult with Asperger's Syndrome may be able to mask their difficulties when away from home;
- adult with Asperger's Syndrome may be unaware of the extent or impact of their difficulties on their own life or their family;
- care systems don't know enough about Asperger's Syndrome and may interpret or assess problems incorrectly;
- appropriate supports and services are simply not available.

Autism Spectrum Disorders are a Family Affair



Without support and professional guidance, adults with Asperger's Syndrome and their partners may lose resilience and the capacity to cope adequately with the challenges of their relationship and parenting, particularly if they have a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder as well.



There is nothing more unjust than a family already called on to **accept the presence of an Autism Spectrum Disorder within the family**, being **denied supports and interventions when sought**, and then **punished or judged for not being able to cope**.

“Without an understanding of Asperger’s Syndrome, people make a moral judgment.”

(Tony Attwood, 13 August 2009)



Improved awareness within our care systems in relation to Asperger's Syndrome in adult relationships and parenting, and the **provision of appropriate supports or referrals**, will ensure that families are **assisted to rebuild the resilience and capacity** they began with and **enable them to cope better** with the circumstances they have been dealt.

The information presented in this leaflet is based on the testimonials of more than 1000 Australian families. Written and presented as a Poster for APAC 09 by Carol Grigg, Co-Founder and President of ASPIA INC Asperger Syndrome Partner Information Australia Incorporated. ASPIA has been conducting support group meetings and educational workshops in Sydney since 2003, as well as providing a helpline and website. Visit www.aspia.org.au or email info@aspia.org.au. Ph: 0432 507 828 (Postal: PO Box 57 Macarthur Sq LPO MACARTHUR NSW 2560)

