

# ASPIA Newsletter - June 2014

*"Providing support to partners of adults with Asperger's Syndrome for more than 10 years"*

## **ASPIA'S NEXT PARTNER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING:**

This coming **Saturday 7 June 2014**  
**1.30pm for a 2pm start - 5pm.**

**The College of Nursing,**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 14 Railway Parade,  
Burwood (Sydney)

\$10.00 per non-member, \$5.00 per member

## **PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE TO OUR STARTING TIME**

Our formal meeting time starts at 2pm now to allow more time for our presenters or group time. We invite you to come from  
**1.30pm for a cuppa & mingle first.**

Please bring something small to share for afternoon tea.

For this meeting we are going to hold an **informal group time** just to "re-group" after having quite a few educational presentations in a row. We always comment on how nice it is sometimes to just have an opportunity to reflect on what we've learned, having time to chat and share and get to know and support each other on a more personal level.

Hope to see you there.

## **Please Note: ASPIA meetings are offered to non-Asperger adults only.**

ASPIA's aim is to provide an emotionally safe place for partners who need support and education from a non-Asperger perspective.

If you have AS and you attempt to attend an ASPIA meeting you will be refused entry.

There are dedicated groups and meetings available specifically for adults with AS.

**ASPIA is not one of these.**

See our website & page 2 of this newsletter for information about AS groups and support.

## **ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2014**

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

**Members please remember to renew your membership and also to return any library books that you've had out on loan for longer than 3 months.**

## **ASPIA LUNCH CLUB**

Anyone attending the support group meeting is welcome to come along earlier between 12noon & 1.00pm to join us for a coffee or bite to eat at the **LITTLE NEPAL Restaurant**

Shop C, 135 Burwood Road, Burwood (Sydney)  
(From Burwood Station, go left & up the hill, a few shops past the Westpac Bank and then cross the road.)

## **Book Feature**

This month I would like to feature Daniel Goleman's book "**Emotional Intelligence. Why it can matter more than IQ**"

First published in 1995, he has made updates and written new material since then under a range of titles, many of which are available from Amazon. One of these is "**The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights**".

I am presently reading the earlier one and there are so many things that ring true for our experience of AS partners. Empathy, Alexithymia, it's all in there and fascinating. I tend to wonder if many older books are in fact describing characteristics of AS before AS had been identified. Just thinking.

**"Anyone can become angry - that is easy.  
But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - this is not easy."**

**ARISTOTLE, The Nicomachean Ethics.**

## **Do Autism symptoms influence parenting?**

**We have been asked to participate in an exploratory study on the Impact of Autism Symptoms on Parenting.**

This is a topic very close to our hearts and one that we would all like to know is being researched and discussed. Each day we observe parenting behaviours that concern us.

**Can I please strongly encourage you to support this research** by following the link below. Select the "Parenting & Child Outcomes" option then you can either click to register or contact Lindsay Pamment direct using email address provided.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/otarc/research/research-themes/focus-on-families>

## **SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS**

### **Grief Counselling**

Epping (Sydney)

**Liz Pash** is a Social Worker, Counsellor and Educator, with understanding of relationships affected by Asperger's Syndrome  
Contact Liz on 0498 964 275 or  
Email [lizlpash@hotmail.com](mailto:lizlpash@hotmail.com)

### **Phone Counselling for partners**

**Carol Grigg**, OAM, Dip Counselling, Member ACA  
Carol has personal experience of an AS marriage (20 years) and 13 years' experience supporting partners through ASPIA as well as attendance at countless educational workshops.

For appointments phone or text 0408 817 828  
[www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au](http://www.carolgriggcounselling.com.au)

**For recommended Psychologists, see the "Professionals List" on ASPIA's website**

## **OTHER PARTNER SUPPORT GROUPS in Australia**

### **Central Coast, NSW**

This group will now meet **every 3 months**  
**Dates: 15 March, 21 June, 20 September.**  
Empire Bay Garden Nursery & Café,  
Poole Crescent, Empire Bay  
Contact ASPIA [info@aspia.org.au](mailto:info@aspia.org.au)

### **Newcastle, NSW**: Possibility of new group

forming. Anyone interested contact ASPIA.

### **Northern Rivers, NSW:**

Phone Debbie on (02) 6676 0483

Email: [northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:northernriversasdnetwork@gmail.com)

### **Brisbane:**

**Queensland Asperger Partners' Support Group (QAPS):**

Phone Helen on 0418 761 652

Email [QAPS.group@gmail.com](mailto:QAPS.group@gmail.com)

### **New - Toowoomba Asperger Partners' Support** (TAPS Group)

Phone Sheena on 0418 790 216

Email [the.taps.group@gmail.com](mailto:the.taps.group@gmail.com)

### **New - Tiaro, Wide Bay (Qld)**

Phone Pat on 07 4193 9239

Email [davies.pat@gmail.com](mailto:davies.pat@gmail.com)

### **Perth:**

Phone Roz on (08) 9284 5252

Email: [rozsdesk@inet.net.au](mailto:rozsdesk@inet.net.au)

### **Melbourne:**

Visit forum at <http://aspartneraus.org/vanilla/>  
or email Melissa [meraine@bigpond.net.au](mailto:meraine@bigpond.net.au)

### **Melbourne**, also Blackburn

<http://www.aspergersvic.org.au/partners/>

## **SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ASPERGER'S SYNDROME**

**For recommended Psychologists see the "Professionals List" on ASPIA's website.**

## **Groups and other Contacts:**

### **"Joining Hans" Group for Adults with AS**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday every month** Burwood, Sydney  
Registrations essential: Contact Eleanor Gittins  
Ph 0408 954 358 or [janetgittins@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgittins@hotmail.com)

### **Support group for Adults with AS**

North Shore, Sydney

Visit website for announcements [www.jdpsy.org](http://www.jdpsy.org)  
or call Jeroen Decates on 0402 028 588

### **Forum-workshops for ASDian adults** on

selected Wednesday afternoons at Hamilton South (NSW), 1.30pm-4pm. Call Leigh 02 4966 1717 or email [aut\\_s\\_pport@yahoo.com.au](mailto:aut_s_pport@yahoo.com.au)

**ASPECT** also has resources for adults

email [info@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:info@autismspectrum.org.au)

or phone 8977 8377

**Aspect's Adult Social Group** – for adults with Asperger's or high functioning autism. Contact Caroline on 0409 603 582.

[adultsocialgroup@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:adultsocialgroup@autismspectrum.org.au)

For more information:

[www.autismspectrum.org.au/adultsocialgroups](http://www.autismspectrum.org.au/adultsocialgroups)

### **Workshops on Relationships, social skills, sexuality**

Liz Dore [www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com](http://www.relationshipsandprivatestuff.com)

### **ASTEEN - Teen social/support group**

includes yahoo group. Contact Adrienne De Morais on 0413 890 311, email [ademorais@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ademorais@optusnet.com.au) or Keren Day on 0416 182 531, email [kerend@live.com.au](mailto:kerend@live.com.au).

### **Thought ...**

I am writing this month's thought as a bit of a word of caution.

My focus is on the nature and extent of investment we make into our relationships in a variety of modes, some examples of which are warmth, time, effort, love, resources, gestures, gifts and of course finances. We know what we are investing because we are aware of the choices we are making about this all the time. Our primary relationship is where we channel the best of what we are and have because we are creating meaning both for ourselves and, hopefully for our partners as well. At least, this is always our hope and expectation - that what we are investing into the relationship will be recognised for the contribution that it is and the goodwill we believe we are creating. We also hope that our contribution will be appropriately received. We have a natural expectation that our partners will value our contribution as much as we do, and of course that they will respond with warmth and goodwill too. There is also a natural expectation that our partners are investing as well, perhaps in different modes to how we contribute, but at least with devotion and goodwill. And it's important for us to recognise their gestures and contribution too.

All in an ideal world.

For some of us in relationships with an ASD adult, there is a gradual realisation within our souls that the ways we are contributing are not actually being recognised or valued. I've touched on this in a previous writing, but just wanted to expand on it a little.

The reason why I think it could ultimately create trouble is if or when one of these relationships ends and negotiations are attempted to measure

or value each partner's contribution in order to work out a fair and reasonable settlement. We know it's not all about the money, and the Courts recognise the existence of goodwill and all the many ways that partners contribute to their situations over many years. It is always nice to think that a settlement can be worked out without the help of lawyers and courts, but when our partner can only measure their own contribution and not ours, we are left in a somewhat disadvantaged and powerless position, unable to influence an outcome that we know is fair.

What concerns me is that in a number of situations I'm aware of, the ASD adult can only recognise the modes of contribution that can be measured, which are typically only the material and financial aspects.

For those who've adjusted their own careers in order to have children, to study, to support their partner's study or career choices, etc, all things that couples do to support each other and their lives together, they may be left in a shaky position.

I don't mean to create fear, but as we learned in our April meeting, awareness places us in a position where we can make choices now about how and what we continue to invest into a relationship that may not actually ultimately be the relationship and future we have imagined and are working towards.

If an ASD adult doesn't recognise the ways you know you are contributing because he/she cannot measure that, you will not be able to quantify your contribution at any point in the relationship including if and when the relationship ends. This is part of that black hole we talk about. Pouring our hearts and souls into a relationship and person we value, but not having our contribution valued. This is similar to the concept of saving money in the bank but the statements never showing the deposits, and the balance is still nil. Ultimately we may realise a similar feeling to being bankrupt even though we've invested much. Our contribution is too precious to be content with that.

Carol Grigg May 2014

**(Before you close this email, please consider the research request on Parenting with AS, top of page 2)**