


ASPIA

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

ASPIA Newsletter – February 2017

 **On behalf of ASPIA's Committee and Members – Greetings, and welcome to a new year of opportunities for strengthening our support network and each other!**

Our first **ASPIA Partner Support Group** meeting for 2017 will be held this coming **Saturday 4th February**.

Please gather from 1.30pm for a 2.00pm start (maybe bring a jacket in case the air conditioning is too cold)

Our Presenter for this meeting will be **Nola Norris**, who has been a long-time faithful member of ASPIA, a current Committee Member, and our web developer since 2005 when our website was established www.aspia.org.au.

Her topic will be **Making Sense of Asperger Syndrome**. Feedback following Nola's presentations is always extremely positive – helps us get our heads around it a little more.

Nola has enjoyed a diverse career in education, having worked in schools (primary and secondary) in both the public and private sectors, and in universities within NSW, Australia.

*The diagnosis of Nola's husband with Asperger syndrome (AS) in 2005 led to an interest in the learning environments encountered by gifted students with AS in mainstream schools. In particular, the research fostered her desire to understand the cognitive profile and learning needs of these twice-exceptional learners. Nola completed her PhD thesis, *A new perspective on thinking, memory and learning in gifted adults with Asperger syndrome: Five phenomenological case studies*, in 2014 at the University of Wollongong, NSW. She employed neuroscience and autism research to interpret her findings from her phenomenological research study, which involved gifted adults with Asperger syndrome as participants.*

Nola's research journey led to the development of a conceptual framework for professional development of pre-service and practising teachers to transform understanding of the unique learning needs and strengths of gifted students who have Asperger syndrome. This framework has also been found to be helpful for parents and life partners of people with autism spectrum disorder.

*[Nola's PhD thesis](#) has been cited in a book that was launched at the University of Wollongong in July 2016: *Teaching university students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder: a guide to developing academic capacity and proficiency*, McMahon-Coleman & Draisma (2016), published by [Jessica Kingsley Publishers](#). (This book was featured in ASPIA's August newsletter.)*

Nola joined the Faculty of Education at Morling College, Macquarie Park, NSW, as the Deputy Director of Programs in early 2016. She is also currently setting up an educational consultancy - www.nelt.com.au.

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 - \$4.

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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 also become popular over the last 12 months.

ASPIA February Newsletter Continued ...

ASPIA Meeting Dates for 2017

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

Other places where 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

Event that may be of interest to partners with ASD: Tony Attwood and Michelle Garnett are holding a Master Class for adults and older adolescents with ASD Level 1 – see <http://www.mindsandhearts.net/events/master-class-adults-and-older-adolescents-with-asd-level-1/sydney>

Thought

I need to ask to be excused from writing Newsletter Thoughts for the time being, but please remember if you feel the need for some validation at any time, we have dozens of Newsletter Thoughts in previous newsletters preserved on our website – www.aspia.org.au/newsletters.html

In 2017 I need to take a little time to just breathe and focus on my own life and family. Part of this is seeking opportunities for additional employment, but very specially, I am welcoming two new little grandbabies into the family and my Grandma duties are going to increase especially during March and April. Happy days.

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My best wishes to all, and thanking you for your understanding,

Carol Grigg OAM

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