

ASPIA'S SELF-CARE SUGGESTIONS

Collection of Ideas by ASPIA group members 6 June 2009

Caring for ourselves . . .

- Put "self" on the agenda
- It's ok to be who I am, like what I like, do things I enjoy; I don't have to only do what my partner approves of
- Create own little space, a desk, use earphones, place of refuge
- Ok to have time for myself
- Do separate activities from partner
- Watch own TV shows, enjoy comedy, laugh (have a separate TV for yourself)
- Find own identity, protect own time
- Have some quiet time
- Ok to have a holiday separate from partner
- Eat properly
- Walk, swim, jog, exercise, massage, yoga, dancing, dancing lessons
- Do classes or a course – art, music, etc
- Have independent income, employment
- Pre-organise support from friends or family following surgery
- Enjoy pets
- Help others
- Spiritual dimension – faith, prayer
- Receive personal counselling
- Release thoughts and feelings by writing in a journal
- Get own anxieties under control (partner may mirror my anxieties)
- Don't get trapped into feeling like you need to justify your needs or existence

Remembering our need for friends . . .

- Get rid of negative friends and choose positive friendships
- Re-establish social times – coffee, movie, etc with friends
- Join a singing group or choir
- Holiday with a friend
- Walk with friends

Remembering our need for friends, cont'd . . .

- Manage phone plans to be able to afford keeping good contact with friends and family
- Attend a support group
- Allow other people in, don't withdraw or isolate

Coping better as a partner . . .

- Understand Asperger's Syndrome and the Asperger "landscape"
- Step back from emotional situations
- Let some things go
- Go around things, not through
- Separate living quarters may help
- Actual separation
- Have options – "If you feel you can leave, then the relationship is safe."
- Adjust your expectations of partner, self and relationship
- Separate Asperger's Syndrome from the person
- Explore partner's perception of me – am I perceived by him/her as being aggressive?
- Remember that people with AS hate conflict
- Learning, thinking, change own mind-set to see problem as opportunity to learn
- Stop seeing self as victim; see self as active member of the relationship
- Emotionally screen out negative words/actions, allow yourself to receive positive words/actions
- Love & commitment – there is a bond, in spite of it all
- Find the right distance between myself and partner that enables me to respect him/her
- Sow seeds of suggestion, allow time
- Give time for AS partner to process things – maybe days or even longer
- Allow them some space
- Allow them some time for their interests
- Realise they understand intellectually not emotionally
- Have flexible plans – build in space and time around plans
- Plan around the reality