

People Who Make A Difference:

In each issue of *On The Spectrum* we highlight a person or people in our community who have made an impact. These are individuals with passion and drive who devote time and energy on behalf of you, your families and your patients. In this issue we have chosen Valerie Gaus, PhD.



Valerie L. Gaus, PhD

Dr. Valerie Gaus is a psychologist who has been a practicing psychotherapist for more than 15 years. She specializes in individual psychotherapy for adults and older teens, with extensive experience serving people with disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, depression, trauma and stress-related problems. She approaches therapy using a cognitive-behavioral framework. Dr. Gaus has lectured nationally and abroad on topics related to dual diagnoses and Asperger syndrome. She has written numerous articles and chapters on these subjects, as well as two books published by Guilford Press: *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Adult Asperger Syndrome* and *Living Well on the Spectrum: How to Use Your Strengths to Meet the Challenges of Asperger Syndrome*. These books are widely used by professionals in the field and yet written in a way that laypeople can understand and utilize. As a member of the AHA advisory board and a presenter at AHA's conferences over the years, Dr. Gaus is a valued contributor in our planning process; always bringing interesting ideas for us to consider, and supportive of our projects. Having the fortune of her nearby presence and expertise, she not only assists with conferences, but adds to many of our activities with her grace, humor and friendship.

Valerie is a consummate clinician, a focused author, and a loyal friend. In the twenty years I have known her, I have become increasingly impressed with her quest for knowledge and ability to integrate it into her practice in the pursuit of helping her clients become all they can be.

-Lynda Gellar, PhD

Dr. Gaus impressed me by her interest in informing professionals while developing practical teaching strategies for adults with AS prior to the greater community recognizing the unique needs of this cohort. I look forward to learning more from her as her ideas continue to evolve.

-Michelle Garcia Winner, MA-CCC, SLP

With her expertise in Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Valerie Gaus has improved the lives of so many people on the autism spectrum both locally in her practice on Long Island and internationally with her book *Living Well on the Spectrum*. Keep up the great work!

-Stephen M. Shore, EdD

I met Valerie Gaus at the first AHA Adult Conference in April 2001, a few months after my AS diagnosis. When most mental health professionals knew nothing about autism and hadn't even heard of AS, here was one with exceptional understanding of the issues and appreciation of what they meant for adults. In the years since, I worked with her on conference panels where I was able to tell my story, and she wrote accessible and informative books. I look forward to her continued contributions to our community.

-Karl Wittig, PE

I have been fortunate to have worked and collaborated with Dr. Valerie Gaus for more than 20 years. She is a passionate leader, clinician, expert and friend to the autism community and those who support individuals on the spectrum. Valerie has taught us empathy and provided tools to be effective in helping an individual reach his/her potential. Her commitment to helping individuals feel empowered and capable of determining their own lives is commendable.

-Matt Sturiale, CEO, Birch Family Services

The impact Dr. Gaus has had on the lives of adults with HFA truly cannot be overstated. Beyond her private practice, Dr. Gaus is a well-respected lecturer, speaking both nationally and internationally, on ways to improve the quality of life of adults on the spectrum. She is the author of two highly regarded books, one of which is considered the "bible" of cognitive behavior therapy and HFA. She is a caring and knowledgeable professional who continues to champion the importance of evidence-based practice in support of good mental and physical health, social inclusion, and life-satisfaction for group of individuals who, far too often, are ignored by the adult service system. I am honored to call her a colleague and even more so to call her a friend.

-Peter F. Gerhardt, EdD

Dr. Valerie Gaus has been a dedicated professional for almost 30 years. She brings the unique combination of knowledge and expertise, insight into others, as well as the ability to be extraordinarily caring and supportive to the individuals she serves and their families. She has enhanced the field through her books and lectures. She is one of a kind and it is our great fortune to know her.

-Mary Murphy Brady, LCSW, YAI - VP of Long Island Services