Improving Communication Strategies for Individuals with Autism

Saturday, May 4, 2019 • 8:15 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

The Viscardi Center
201 I.U. Willets Road
Albertson, NY 11507
Dear professional, family member, friend or individuals on the autism spectrum,

This year at our annual Spring Conference AHA is proud to present: Improving Communication Strategies for Individuals with Autism, featuring keynote speaker Alexander “Alex” Plank. Alex is the creator of the website Wrong Planet and consultant to the television show The Bridge. Alex will present on Autism in the Media. Our other speakers include Jackie Bowen, Kate Cody, Dena Gassner, Gina Moravcik, Stephen Shore, Kate Trammell and Zosia Zaks presenting effective communication strategies for individuals, families and professionals in employment, healthcare and in the community. The Voices from the Spectrum Panel offer insights from personal experiences. This conference will be live streamed for those who are unable to attend in person.

ABOUT ASPERGER SYNDROME AND HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM ASSOCIATION (AHA)
The Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Association (AHA) serves individuals with Asperger’s syndrome and related conditions, their families and the professionals who work alongside them, providing crucial resources and support as they face challenges, build on their strengths and fulfill their potential. Founded in 1988 and based on Long Island, with a satellite office in New York City, AHA is directed by a dedicated volunteer executive board and expert professional advisory board. AHA’s services reach nearly 10,000 people annually through one-to-one phone and e-support, more than a dozen monthly support meetings, a highly informative AHA e-newsletter, family recreation events, biannual education conferences, a biannual print publication, On the Spectrum, and signature fundraisers such as its annual ROCK ‘N’ BOWL for Autism. By maintaining efficient administrative practices more than 80 percent of every supporter dollar donated to AHA goes directly to providing and expanding its services.

Order of the Day

8:15 a.m. Check-in, Resource Walkway, and Continental Breakfast 9:00 a.m. Greetings from AHA
9:15 a.m. **Keynote Presentation:** AUTISM IN THE MEDIA
Presenter: Alex Plank

10:15 a.m. Resource Walkway

10:45 a.m. **Morning Presentation:** EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES IN THE WORKPLACE
Presenters: Gina Moravcik, CCC-SLP, Jackie Bowen, CCC-SLP and Zosia Zaks, MEd, CRC

12:00 p.m. Lunch, Resource Walkway

1:00 p.m. **Special Presentation:** EPIC PLAYERS: A NEURO-INCLUSIVE THEATRE COMPANY
Moderator: Aubrie Therrien, MPH Featuring: EPIC Players Performers

1:30 p.m. **Voices from the Spectrum:** COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES THAT WORK
Moderator: Dena Gassner, MSW Panelists: Alex Plank, Stephen Shore, EdD, Kate Trammell, MA, and Zosia Zaks, MEd, CRC

2:45 p.m. Resource Walkway

3:15 p.m. **Afternoon Presentation:** NAVIGATING NEURODIVERSE COMMUNICATION: STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE
Presenters: Katherine Cody, PsyD, and Dena Gassner, MSW

4:15 p.m. **Conclusion of Conference**

Conference registration includes a handbook containing materials from the presenters. A continental breakfast and lunch are also included. Agency, school, camp, recreation and other service provider representatives will be available with information at our Resource Walkway.

Should you, or your guests, require an accommodation based on a disability, or need to request an ASL interpreter, please contact us by phone at 888-918-9198 or email at conference@ahany.org. Please allow for a reasonable time frame prior to the event; we suggest a minimum of five business days.
ALEX PLANK, KEYNOTE is an autism advocate, filmmaker, and actor. He is best known for founding Wrong Planet (wrongplanet.net), an online community, which has grown to be the largest forum for autistic people. Alex has also served as consultant to FX’s television series The Bridge, and acted on the current season of The Good Doctor. At the age of nine, he was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. He started Wrong Planet at the age of 17 in order to find others like him on the Internet. After the popularity of Wrong Planet grew, Plank has been frequently mentioned in the mainstream media in articles relating to autism, Asperger’s, and autism rights.

GINA-MARIE MORAVCIK, MA, CCC-SLP, is the owner of Sunrise Speech and Language Services. For the past 20 years her practice has focused on working with individuals of all ages, children through adults, providing diagnostic and therapeutic services with an emphasis on social communication and problem solving skills.

JACQUELINE BOWEN, MS, CCC-SLP, specializes in individual and group therapy for individuals on the autism spectrum with a focus on pragmatic skills, job readiness and cognitive learning.

ZOSIA ZAKS, MEd, CRC, has served as the Manager of Programs and Education at Towson University’s Hussman Center for Adults with Autism since 2013. Previously, he worked at Maryland’s Division of Rehabilitation Services. Zaks brings to his endeavors multiple perspectives as a professional, a parent, and a self-advocate.

EPIC PLAYERS: A NEURO-INCLUSIVE THEATRE COMPANY
Moderator: Aubrie Therrien, MPH Featuring: EPIC Players Performers
EPIC Players (Empower, Perform, Include, Create) is a nonprofit, neuro-diverse theatre company that provides access, education, opportunity and community to artists living with autism and other developmental disabilities. We seek to increase social and workplace opportunities in the arts for our members and to break down negative stereotypes surrounding neuro-diverse communities through the arts. The EPIC Players produce several neuro-diverse performances per year in venues such as Joe’s Pub at The Public Theater, HBO Theater, and The Flea. They recently rang the opening bell at the NYSE for Autism Awareness Month and spoke on the importance of representation in the media at The United Nations.

AUBRIE THERRIEN, MPH, is the Executive Artistic Director of The EPIC Players. She holds a BFA in Theater from Longwood University and a Masters of Public Health from New York University. She is a passionate advocate for inclusion arts and was recognized as New Yorker of the Week for her work.
“COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES THAT WORK”
Moderator: Dena Gassner, MSW
Panelists: Alex Plank, Stephen Shore, EdD, Kate Trammell, MA, Zosia Zaks, MEd, CRC

This presentation will be an informal panel of autistic adults sharing their lived experiences, strategies, and ideas on how to manage the two-way exchange we call “communication.” Through panel presentations and a question and answer period, participants will learn insights and ideas of how communication is a two-way street and how both autistics and non-autistic individuals can achieve enhanced understanding in communication settings.

DENA GASSNER, MSW, PhD CANDIDATE in social work at Adelphi University, is an Adjunct Professor in the Autism Certificate Program at Towson University. She is a national board member for Arc US and has provided consultative services and given testimony to the Government Accountability Office in Washington and at the UN in Geneva. She has presented locally and internationally. Gassner is a published author most recently in the acclaimed book, Spectrum Women: Walking to the Beat of Autism. She is a member of AHA’s Professional Advisory Board and co-facilitates our monthly Women’s support group.

STEPHEN SHORE, EdD, teaches in the Ruth S. Ammon School of Education at Adelphi University. He presents and consults internationally on educational and social inclusion. His books are translated into many languages. Dr. Shore is a member of the AHA professional advisory board.

KATE TRAMMELL, MA, is an arts administrator, educator, and Aspergirl based in New York City. In addition to her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre with an emphasis on Acting & Directing from Sam Houston State University, she earned a Master of Arts degree in Educational Theatre from New York University. In addition to working in various theatre spaces as a performer and educator, she works as an arts administrator for the Department of Education’s Office of Arts and Special Projects. She leads the AIMS Mentor program, for Actionplay, Inc. for neurodiverse individuals.

Resource Walkway 2:45 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

AFTERNOON PRESENTATION 3:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

“NAVIGATING NEURODIVERSE COMMUNICATION: STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE”
Presenters: Dena Gassner, MSW and Katherine Cody, PsyD

When individuals with ASD engage in clinical relationships (such as therapy or diagnostic evaluations), they often struggle to articulate their experiences as clearly related to the ASD diagnosis. This is not because they do not recognize the traits and differences as a part of their experience, but because they have not yet had the opportunity to build a language or vocabulary that clinicians are accustomed to using. The purpose of this talk is to assist clinicians and Autistics to develop strategies for building the bridge for more effective communication to improve clinical experiences.

KATHERINE CODY, PsyD, is the coordinator of clinical services and training director at Spectrum Services. She conducts psychological and neuropsychological evaluations and psychotherapy services. She also trains and supervises externs and interns in school and clinical psychology. Dr. Cody is a member of the AHA Professional Advisory Board and co-facilitates two of our monthly support groups.

ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THE CONFERENCE BROCHURE CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT AHANY.ORG

For further information email: conference@ahany.org

To enhance our ability to serve our community, we are delighted to announce that AHA will become part of AANE in spring 2019. AANE is a well-respected Boston-based organization serving the same population as AHA. Our merger will not only ensure continuity of AHA’s existing services to NYC and Long Island, but will also enable us to introduce vital programming to NY that doesn’t already exist. We look forward to building partnerships and collaborating with individuals, organizations, and agencies that share our values.
State regulations require that participants must be present for the entire approved educational activity in order to receive credits. There is no accommodation in the state regulations for late arrival, late return from lunch or breaks or early departure. At present, there is no procedure for granting partial credit for approved continuing education events. If there is a change in the state regulations, this policy will update accordingly.

**Social Workers**: Application for social work continuing education credits has been submitted. Please contact us at ahany.org for the status of social work CE accreditation. Once approved, this course will be offered for 5 credits. You will pay an additional $25 at the conference sign in table. Please email conference@ahany.org for more information.

**Membership Policy**: Membership in AHA is a family membership for those residing in the same household. Your membership must be current as of the date of this conference. If you are unsure if your membership is current please contact our office at: membership@ahany.org. Your registration will not be processed if your membership is not current.

**Confirmation Policy**: Online registrations automatically receive confirmation. If registering by mail or if further information is required, email conference@ahany.org.

**Cancellation Policy**: In the instance of event cancellation, all registrants will be fully reimbursed. Refund Policy: A $25 processing fee will be applied to all refund requests. No refunds will be permitted after April 1, 2019.

**Dietary Requirements**: Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches and salads (including vegetarian and gluten-free options), chips, cookies and a beverage. We cannot accommodate any other dietary restrictions and there is no discount if you bring your own lunch.

**Walk-ins**: If space is available walk-ins will be charged an additional $25. (Lunch may not be available) Check with the AHA office prior to the conference sign in table.*

**Scholarship Information**: AHA offers a number of partial scholarships to students and/or family members that show substantial need. You must download a scholarship form and fill it out, including the reason for this limited need based scholarship. Our scholarship committee will review and inform you as soon as we are able. Download a scholarship form and a registration form on the AHA website at www.ahany.org. Mail them to AHA, along with the suggestion donation, to AHA Association, PO Box 916, Bethpage, NY 11714-0916

**Certified Autism Specialist (CAS)**: You do not pay a direct fee to AHA to receive autism specialist hours. However, if you are signing up with IBCCES please use the AHA code so that we receive credit. Register for the AHA Conference and then when you go to The International Board of Credentialing you will receive a 20% discount (using the code AHA) for your Autism Specialist credits. www.certifiedautismspecialist.com. Learn more at IBCCES.org. We take attendance and notify IBCCES.

**Attendance Information for Social Workers and Autism Specialist Participants**: “New York State Office of the Professions (NYSED) regulations require that participants must be present for the entire approved educational activity in order to receive a certificate for continuing education credits. There is no accommodation in the state regulations for late arrival, late return from lunch or breaks or early departure. At present, there is no procedure for granting partial credit for approved continuing education events. If there are any changes in state regulation, this policy will update accordingly.”

**Purchase orders accepted. Fax 631.608.8920 or mail to: AHA Association P.O. Box 916 Bethpage, NY 11714-0916**

**Your tax-deductible contribution will be used to provide conference scholarships or to further the work of the Asperger Syndrome & High Functioning Autism Association, Inc.**
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