

A Guide to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for Advocates: How to Effectively Address PTSD in Matters Involving Veterans and Others Affected by Trauma

San Francisco, Live Webcast and www.pli.edu*, July 19, 2017

Why You Should Attend

Although PTSD can cause symptoms that significantly affect cognition and behavior, the people who assist or make critical decisions affecting those who experience PTSD may not recognize or understand these symptoms well. This training provides advocates with an understanding of PTSD that will allow them to:

- Work productively with clients who have experienced trauma;
- Learn about PTSD and how it may relate to clients' legal issues;
- Partner effectively with mental health professionals; and
- Develop compelling evidence to support advocacy for individuals affected by PTSD.

What You Will Learn

Led by a faculty that includes a VA psychologist with extensive clinical expertise in PTSD and lawyers specializing in mental health-related advocacy, this training will provide:

- An understanding of how trauma and PTSD affect the brain;
- A description of PTSD symptoms and how they affect people in their day-to-day lives;
- Discussion of how PTSD symptoms can be relevant in legal proceedings;
- Guidance for developing relevant information and evidence about PTSD;
- Insight into mental health reports, evaluations, and other clinical evidence; and
- Strategies for working effectively with mental health professionals to develop and present information about PTSD that supports advocacy for those affected by trauma.

Who Should Attend

Any advocate involved in services, benefits, access to justice, or other assistance to clients who experience PTSD should attend this training to expand their understanding and enhance their ability to work effectively on issues affecting this sometimes misunderstood population.

Program Schedule

9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

9:00

Program Overview and Introductions
Barbara Saavedra

9:15

Introduction to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

This session will provide an overview of PTSD, explaining what constitutes a traumatic event, the constellation of symptoms that define PTSD, and how traumatic experiences are processed differently in the brain than other experiences. With examples of how PTSD affects day-to-day functioning, recall, and behavior, we will discuss issues that arise in advocacy that can be addressed through a greater understanding of PTSD.

John R. McQuaid, Ph.D., Barbara Saavedra

10:15

Working with Clients and Developing Relevant Information about PTSD

We will offer guidance on how to discuss trauma and work with individuals who experience PTSD in light of the symptoms that affect them. With the aim of promoting reliable clinical assessment and developing relevant documentary evidence and lay witness statements or testimony, we will discuss approaches to developing evidence and information about PTSD to advance advocacy efforts.

David Joseph, Ph.D., Barbara Saavedra

11:15

Networking Break

11:30

Understanding Clinical Evidence and Working with Mental Health Professionals

In this hour, we will provide insight into the elements of a clinical evaluation for PTSD and the benefits of collaborating with mental health professionals to develop an accurate picture of clients' abilities and impairment. The discussion will include tips for how advocates can think critically about mental health treatment and evaluation, engage effectively with mental health professionals, and the role of Medical-Legal Partnerships in promoting the interests of advocacy as well as population health.

Rose Carmen Goldberg, David Joseph, Ph.D., Barbara Saavedra

12:30

Adjourn

Faculty

Chairperson

Barbara Saavedra

Senior Staff Attorney
Swords to Plowshares
San Francisco, CA

Rose Carmen Goldberg

Skadden Fellow, Swords to Plowshares
Legal Director, Medical-Legal Partnership with the Oakland Vet Center
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David Joseph, Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist
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John R. McQuaid, Ph.D.

Acting Chief of Mental Health
San Francisco VA Healthcare System
San Francisco, CA

Program Attorney: Christina Thompson