

Inaugural MHA Training Is Up to the TASC

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In May 2006, the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHA-SF) was excited to present our first annual consumer advocacy training, Training for Advocacy-Skills-Connections (TASC). This five-week leadership training covered the importance of

advocacy and how to advocate to improve our mental health system. Our kickoff meeting featured Dr. Laura Kerr, who spoke about how stigma affects recovery and advocacy. The second week of the training provided a description of our local government structures. Edwin Batongbacal, director of Adult Services at Community Behavioral Health Services (CBHS), explained the structure of

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Diplomas in hand, here's to one happy group of "multi-TASCers," class of 2006.

Up to the TASC

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the Department of Public Health and CBHS. James Keys, staff at Supervisor Chris Daly's office and member of the Mental Health Board, explained the role of the Mental Health Board, and Lane Kasselmann from the Mayor's Office of Public Policy offered suggestions on how to advocate with the Board of Supervisors.

In our third week the TASC participants attended a Health Commission meeting to observe and provide comment at a public meeting. The fourth week of the TASC included information and discussion about research and writing skills and public speaking. Alecia Hopper, MHA-SF public policy coordinator, discussed the seven steps of writing an effective advocacy letter and I, myself, gave tips, techniques, and examples on public speaking. TASC members also had the opportunity to practice public speaking with a short speech. At the fifth and final week of the

TASC, Jerry Fillingim from the Service Employees International Union explained the purpose of community organizing and Fancher Larson reviewed legal rights and resources.

There were 18 proud graduates from the 2006 TASC. 75% of TASC graduates reported an increase in their policy and advocacy skills. Congratulations TASC graduates!

The next TASC will be held in May 2007. If you are interested in the TASC or getting more involved in mental health advocacy, please contact Antonio Morgan at (415) 421-2926 ext. 306, or antonio@mha-sf.org.