

MC Script for Seminar 15

Good afternoon everybody. Welcome.

My name is Caroline Alegre, and I am the Advocacy Program Manager for People With Disabilities Foundation. I am very pleased to be the MC for today's seminar entitled, "Reasonable Accommodations in Housing for People with Psychiatric and/or Developmental Disabilities." This is the 15th, 3-hour seminar in a series of educational seminars, ranging in topics from Multiculturalism to employment and post-secondary education, in the psychiatric and/or developmentally disabled community.

People With Disabilities Foundation was founded 15 years ago, with a mission of total integration of people with mental and/or developmental impairments into the whole of society. PWDF is a Section 501(c)(3) public charity based in San Francisco. Our primary focus is on psychiatric and developmental disabilities. In addition to seminars, we produce training videos for Human Resource Directors and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and CDs on subjects such as Social Security work incentive programs and Housing. Our other program component is hands-on advocacy in 8 counties for representation in Social Security cases AND education, employment, healthcare and housing as these areas relate to individuals' mental disabilities.

Our founder and Legal Director, Steven Bruce, has spent over 25 years as an advocate for those with disabilities. He is a member of the California, Florida and the District of Columbia bars, and admitted to practice before the US Supreme Court.

Note that the San Francisco Library does not permit us to solicit donations on these premises. Please respect their rules and direct inquiries to our San Francisco office at 507 Polk Street. Our web address is www.pwdf.org or www.peopewithdisabilities.org.

Like the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988 require that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to housing, with or without reasonable accommodations. Under the law, people with disabilities have the same rights to participate and/or enjoy programs and activities regarding housing, employment, education, and other activities. This includes the right to live in the most integrated setting. We have a panel of experts today who will

explain what this means, in practical terms, for people with mental and/or developmental disabilities.

We encourage audience participation throughout the seminar but PLEASE wait for the microphone to be brought to you. There will be one 10-minute intermission midway through the seminar, and I will be singing a couple of tunes for you during that break.

If you are attending for continuing education credits, please be sure that you sign-in on the proper form at the registration desk and turn in the evaluations before you leave. For legal continuing education, certificates will be available at the end of the seminar. For behavioral health providers, we will send you your certificates. Please take a moment to sign up to receive our e-newsletters on PWDF's sign-in sheet.

Many of the handouts and other materials from this seminar will be available on our website in the upcoming weeks.

We are honored to have several speakers today who have extensive expertise on this topic. They are:

Dr. Tara Collins is a psychiatrist and assistant professor with the University of California, San Francisco. She is board certified in adult psychiatry and forensic psychiatry. She subspecialized in inpatient psychiatry, emergency psychiatry and community psychiatry.

Thomas E. Drohan is a staff attorney specializing in housing law with Legal Assistance to the Elderly, and the new litigation supervisor for Eviction Defense Collaborative, in San Francisco. Mr. Drohan has over 20 years' experience in housing law and has represented hundreds of tenants in Superior Court and at the San Francisco Rent Board.

Michael Rossoff is an attorney with over 30 years' experience in representing landlords in San Francisco. Mr. Rossoff has served as a Commissioner for the San Francisco Rent Board. He is landlord counsel for many non-profit housing corporations providing housing for thousands of low-income San Franciscans.

Colleen Janatpour is a Consultant III Specialist with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH). Colleen has been an employee with the State of California for over 22 years, with 9 of those years at the DFEH. Ms. Janatpour has extensive knowledge

of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, and the Fair Housing Amendments.

Lilian Miwa Maher is a Consultant who conducts neutral investigations of housing discrimination complaints filed with the State of California DFEH. She has worked with adults with disabilities since high school, and has worked with children with disabilities in various capacities. Ms. Miwa Maher began investigating fair housing for a local fair housing organization, and as an attorney volunteering for eviction settlement conferences. Prior to joining the DFEH, she volunteered with the AIDS Legal Referral Panel providing longer term eviction defense.

Joe Femino is Director of Housing, Residential, and Day Services, at The Arc of San Francisco. Mr. Femino has been with The Arc for 26 years, beginning as a Direct Service Professional. He has worked in many of The Arc's services including Group Employment, Community Training, Job Placement and Residential/Housing.

Victoria Tedder is a Housing Advocate for the Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC) in San Francisco. She has over 20 years' experience working with clients with disabilities at the ILRC, teaching Fair Housing, tenants' rights and housing search skills. She has also taught Fair Housing to staff members from independent living centers throughout California.

We also have several tenants and family members who will share their experiences related to housing issues for people with psychiatric and/or developmental disabilities. This includes Lisa Noriega, Aisha Scott, and Allen Zeltzer.

Our moderators today are April Banerjee, PWDF's Public Awareness and Education Program Manager, who is also an attorney, and Steven Bruce, Legal Director, People With Disabilities Foundation. He is a former Public Defender; Senior Attorney, Social Security Administration and HHS and Education's Office for Civil Rights. He also operated a private Social Security Disability practice for 10 years.

Just a few last reminders: Food and beverages are not allowed in the auditorium. Emergency exits are located through the side doors on both sides of the stage and through the main stairway outside the Auditorium entrance. The emergency exit for wheelchairs is through the main entrance at the back of the auditorium. In an emergency situation, please follow the directions given.

Please make sure that your cell phone ringers are turned off.

Again, if you want to ask a question, please just wait for someone to come and bring you the microphone.

Thank you for coming today and for participating in this important discussion.

With that said, I will pass the microphone to April Banerjee, PWDF's Manager for Public Awareness and Education.