

2015 Program on Mitigation

July 22-24, 2015 at The Center for American & International Law, Plano Texas

A note from the chairs Ken Murray (Texas Defender Service) and Naomi Terr (Texas Defender Service):

“The mitigation function of a criminal defense team involves the development of a persuasive narrative in support of meaningful and focused sentencing-related decisions by prosecutors, jurors, and/or the courts. This program is designed to improve the criminal defense teams’ ability to produce powerful and effective sentencing arguments and narratives.

The program will bring local and national experts to discuss how to investigate, develop, and present effective sentencing advocacy evidence. They will provide guidance and training on the nuts-and-bolts of sentencing advocacy investigations, including record collection, organization, and presentation. They will also provide guidance and training on interviewing skills and techniques, and provide tips on generating a persuasive sentencing narrative for criminal cases.

Attendees will receive training and updates on a myriad of behavioral science and mental health legal issues related to sentencing and criminal defense, such as diagnostic criteria under the DSM 5, adjudicative competency criteria, and representation of defendants who have mental illness and/or who have been exposed to trauma. This program will also address how attorneys, mitigation specialists, and other support staff can function effectively in sentencing advocacy settings. The program will be relevant to capital and non-capital criminal defense functions, as it will cover the history of the ABA Guidelines as they relate to the mitigation function of capital defense teams, but do so in order to set the groundwork for best practices discussions relevant to all criminal defense cases that require sentencing advocacy skills and efforts.

We encourage criminal defense teams, including attorneys, mitigation experts, investigators, and paralegals, to attend this program so they can expand on and improve investigative skills and task management practices necessary for a collaborative practice environment.”