

Good morning my name is Amy Price and I am the Chief of the Office of Consumer Advocacy and Protection at the Ohio Department of Mental Health. I joined ODMH in March of 2009, after working for community mental health providers for 20 years.

Since arriving at ODMH last year the Office of Consumer Advocacy and Protection has expanded to include the following:

- Consumer Rights & Protection
- Consumer Advocacy
- The Toll Free Bridge
- Employment
- Housing
- Homelessness through the administration of the Federal PATH Program
- Cluster-Based Planning
- Medicaid Buy-In
- Expedited SSI
- the 2010 Census Committee
- and NASW's Workplace Safety Taskforce

As a result of our expansion, the CAP Office now has designated Project Leads for our work. Kathryn Remer, who many of you already know, is the ODMH Project Lead for Consumer Advocacy & Protection. For more information about the CAP Office, feel free to read our new Quarterly Empowerment and Advocacy Brief available here for you today. We will begin efforts to update all portions of the CAP areas on the ODMH Website in April.

My purpose is to welcome both old friends and new to ODMH's Community Rights Training. It is my understanding that the last training of this kind was held in 2007. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our presenters for their willingness to participate, in addition to their ongoing commitment to helping to ensure that consumers' voices are heard and that their rights & responsibilities are upheld. I do want to especially thank Kathryn Remer for making this training available for all of us today. She has worked hard to develop the agenda from the feedback provided in 2007, arrange the speakers, and obtain the CEUs. As a reminder, you need to stay the entire day to obtain CEUs.

In terms of housekeeping, I want to draw your attention to today's agenda. We have included purpose statements under each agenda item in order to keep each portion of our day focused, as many of these topics could fill an entire day on their own. Made available for you today are handouts for many of the presentations as well as other empowerment and advocacy resources. Lunch is available on-site. The rest rooms are located pass the registration table down the hall to the right towards the Crossroads Café, then to the left across from the ATM and vending area. Even though we have formal breaks scheduled throughout the day please feel free to take care of any needs as they emerge. We do ask that conversations with neighbors be kept to a minimum, in addition to cell phones being silenced or turned off. If you need to take a phone call, we ask that you leave the room prior to answering your phone.

On behalf of ODMH, the CAP Office Staff, and today's presenters I thank you for your attendance and mindfulness directed towards the purpose of today's training. In the spirit of helpful advocacy, I am certain that each participant and presenter today will be treated with dignity and respect. As we all know, advocacy is not about substituting our own beliefs for the beliefs of others, not about creating conflict for its own sake, not a way to get even for past wrongs, and not an opportunity to make one feel powerful at the expense of others. High quality advocacy is a type of problem solving used to protect rights, change discriminatory and abusive practices, improve services and access, and remove barriers while simultaneously promoting recovery, resiliency, dignity, equality, self-determination, and hope.

Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to all other forms of life. We must recognize that the suffering of one person or one nation is the suffering of humanity and that the happiness of one person or nation is the happiness of humanity. It is my belief that we are all here with a purpose greater than ourselves.

Thank you and welcome. Enjoy your day!