

# Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: DEI Mentorship and Professional Development Series

## Overview

Our program provided opportunities for psychology interns and postdoctoral fellows to gather off-site in community and receive mentorship from psychologists from diverse identities and career paths. Topics included navigating job searches and negotiation for employment, financial aspects of the profession, and how to honor various aspects of their identities as they progress in their career. Trainees were also given the optional opportunity to observe their work-related quality of life and how these events impacted their burnout levels.

## Data Snapshot

Day 1 attendees: 9 trainees, 3 staff

Day 2 attendees: 17 trainees, 7 staff

Day 3 attendees: 17 trainees and significant others, 2 staff

22 trainees provided feedback to anonymous surveys we created after each day

## Resources

<https://sparksocialsf.com/>



## Project Details

Our program took place across 3 days at Spark Social SF with hosted lunches. After each of these events, trainees had the opportunity to provide feedback via an anonymous survey, and their feedback was incorporated into subsequent days.

On Day 1, psychology interns and postdoctoral fellows gathered for lunch and socialization. They then had the opportunity to hear from 3 staff members and discussed the landscape of VA careers, the benefits and challenges of federal employment, and systemic challenges in working in a large healthcare system, as well as work/life balance.

On Day 2, trainees engaged in career mentorship discussions with 4 staff members, including those from clinical positions, research positions, and administrative positions. We discussed ways to navigate the job search process, as well as how to advocate during negotiations.

On Day 3, trainees were able to bring an additional significant other to gather, socialize, and eat great food the venue had to offer. This final day was an appreciation day to honor trainees for the hard work they contributed to the UCSF and San Francisco VA communities.

## Project Challenges

We received feedback that it was difficult for trainees to reschedule appointments or obtain time off to attend the events, which occurred during typical working hours. After receiving this feedback, we discussed with supervisors the importance of supporting their trainees' attendance to these events as it contributes to their overall wellbeing and can help with work-related burnout. This helped increase attendance on the second and third days of the event.

## Lessons Learned

Anecdotally, gathering in-person with peers is vital in supporting trainees' learning, work/life balance, and quality of life. To quote one of our attendees, "I think it is so important to have events like this to foster community in the training program. We are moving toward more remote work and many people lament at the loss of connection. Integrating these events helps to build that connection back while also fostering trainee wellness."

Additionally, continued efforts to encourage supervisee and trainee participation, as well as frequent reminders about the event, can help facilitate attendance.