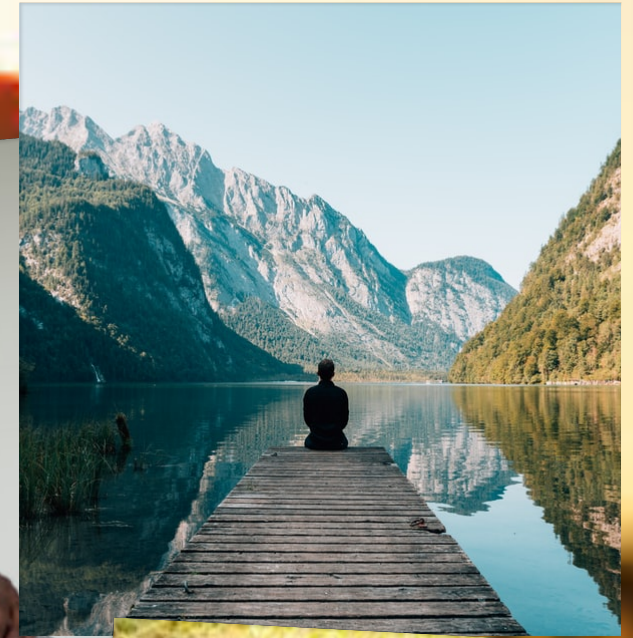


Staying Sane During Insane Times: Wellness and Assistance for Lawyers

Team Brown & Wilson

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Checking in, Noticing,
And Letting Go.





Michael



Steve



Jennifer



Andrew



Keri



Rebecca



Shannon

Humans Having a Lawyer Experience

Scan of Our Mind and Physical Body



Cultivating space



Small Groups

- What does it mean to “Let Go”
 - How can we practice this?
 - How is this practice important for wellbeing?
 - How is this practice necessary to our professional community?
- What do you believe are the greatest barriers to experiencing wellbeing?
- What can we do to cultivate more selfcare and wellness in our legal community?

Connection > Isolation



Our relationships have more impact on
our health than any other factor—
including diet, exercise or even smoking.

(source: *America's Loneliness Epidemic: A Hidden Systemic Risk to Organizations*)

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/health_law/publications/health_lawyer_home/2020-february/chair/



Connection Matters

- ***Social connection is a primal human need.*** It improves the cardiovascular, endocrine and immune systems' performance.
- Loneliness:
 - associated with poorer cognitive performance, including poorer executive function and social cognition.
 - may impair executive control and self-regulation, including with respect to greater smoking and alcohol consumption.
 - related to lower levels of self-rated physical health.
 - associated with substance abuse, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation.

(source: *America's Loneliness Epidemic: A Hidden Systemic Risk to Organizations*)

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/health_law/publications/health_lawyer_home/2020-february/chair/)

Case Study: UK

- “Loneliness is one of the greatest public health challenges of our time”
- National loneliness strategy
- UK Minister of Loneliness
- The Office for National Statistics:
 - How often do you feel lonely?
 - How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
 - How often do you feel left out?
 - How often do you feel isolated from others?



(sources: *PM launches Government's first loneliness strategy* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy>; *A connected society A strategy for tackling loneliness – laying the foundations for change* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936725/6.4882_DCMS_Loneliness_Strategy_web_Update_V2.pdf)

Lawyer Loneliness Was a Major Challenge *Before the Pandemic*

- 2018: In a breakdown of loneliness and social support rates by profession, legal practice was the loneliest kind of work

(source: <https://hbr.org/2018/03/americas-loneliest-workers-according-to-research>)

- 2019: lawyers report the highest levels of loneliness

(source: *The Prevalence and Effects of Loneliness in the General Population, Lawyer Well-being, and a Survey of Law Students*
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3390457)

Though our profession relies on personal *interaction* – be it with colleagues within an organization, our clients, or opposing counsel – the lack of personal *connection* is prevalent in our adversarial, fast-paced, and high-stress profession.

Why Are Lawyers More Lonely?

- Long hours working in isolation
- Viewing colleagues as competition
- Lack of control over time
- Duty to safeguard client secrets from everyone forever
- Intense workload
- Naturally independent

(source: *The Prevalence and Effects of Loneliness in the General Population, Lawyer Well-being, and a Survey of Law Students* https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3390457)



General Ideas to Help

- Name the problem
- Self care
- Proactively engage with other people and activities
- Stay involved with groups like Inns
- Find activities to break up the daily routine
- Vary work tasks
- Firms:
 - Focus on building relationships/teams
 - Cultivate purpose/meaning
 - Mentoring
 - Constructive, not critical, feedback



(sources: *Lawyer loneliness: Facing and fighting 'No. 1 public health issue'* https://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/lawyer_loneliness_public_health
The Prevalence and Effects of Loneliness in the General Population, Lawyer Well-being, and a Survey of Law Students
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3390457)

Connecting During Remote Work



- Make an effort to share lunch or walks with your significant other, child, or others in your household
- Brave the cold and meet a colleague for outdoor coffee, lunch, or happy hour.
- Make it a weekly task/reminder to connect with someone for a reason other than work
- If you are part of an office, suggest starting a weekly zoom gathering

Getting Back to Normal After Pandemic

- We have all established new unhealthy habits of isolation
- We will have to break current habits and reestablish old habits of connection



Discussion Questions

- How often do you feel lonely?
- How do you intentionally increase connection with others?



SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- ❖ Legal Drugs

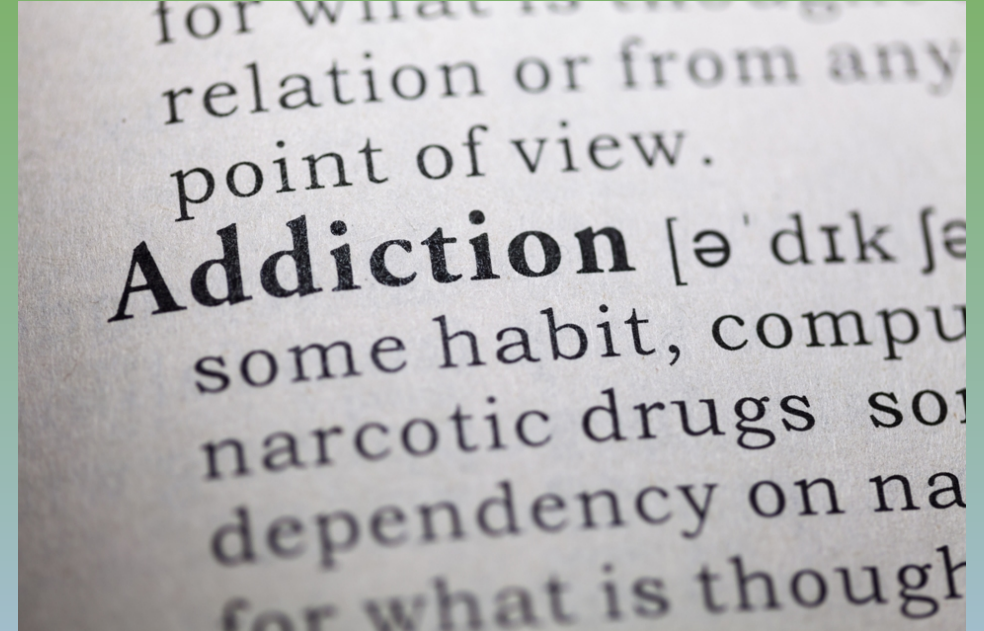
- ❖ Illegal Drugs

- ❖ Tobacco

- ❖ Other substances

- ❖ Gambling, Eating Disorders, Other Compulsive Behavior

- ❖ Alcohol



ALCOHOL

- **21% to 36% of all lawyers are problem drinkers, i.e. between one in 5 and one in 3 of all lawyers have a drinking problem.**
- **Young attorneys, (ten years or less), have the highest rate.**
- **Next highest rate by profession is construction workers, (16.5%) and arts professionals (11% - 14%).**
- **General population rate of problem drinkers is 7%.**
- **Why? Stress, worry about student loans, legal culture, many other causes?**



RESOURCES: ORGANIZATIONS

- Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP)

<https://oaap.org/>

- American Bar Association

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/alcohol_abuse_dependence/

- The Recovery Village

<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/>

- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

RESOURCES: ARTICLES

- **“The Alarming Alcoholism Rates for Lawyers”**
<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/alcohol-abuse/alarming-alcoholism-rate-lawyers/>
- **“Midyear 2018: Panel to Examine Lawyer Substance Abuse, Mental Health – and Solutions”**
https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2018/02/midyear_2018_panel/
- **“Alcohol Use Disorders”**
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/alcohol_abuse_dependence/
- **“Problem Substance Use”** <https://oaap.org/services/problem-substance-use/>

Small Group Discussion

- What ways can we improve networking events to be sensitive to addiction issues within in our profession?
- What ways can we help our colleagues who may be struggling?

RECOGNIZING TRAUMA IN OURSELVES AND CLIENTS

Potential Sources of Trauma

- Job insecurity
- Working from home – harder to separate work life from home life
- Family issues – illness, death
- Doom Scrolling
- Political unrest
- Vicarious trauma
- Elevated during COVID-19



Vicarious Trauma – What is it?

- A trauma process that occurs time when an individual is exposed indirectly to the suffering of others for whom they feel responsible.
- Can be triggered by types of cases and information you are exposed to (Immigration, Criminal, Juvenile, Family Law) – applies to attorneys AND judges
- The legal profession experiences elevated rates of stress, vicarious trauma, and depressive symptoms more than other professionals.



Symptoms & Signs of Trauma

- Having client/work demands regularly encroach on personal time
- Feeling overwhelmed and physically and emotionally exhausted
- Having disturbing images from cases intrude into thoughts and dreams
- Becoming pessimistic, cynical, irritable, and prone to anger
- Viewing the world as inherently dangerous, and becoming increasingly vigilant about personal and family safety
- Becoming emotionally detached and numb in professional and personal life; experiencing increased problems in personal relationships
- Withdrawing socially and becoming emotionally disconnected from others
- Becoming demoralized and questioning one's professional competence and effectiveness
- Secretive self-medication/addiction (alcohol, drugs, work, sex, food, gambling, etc.)
- Becoming less productive and effective professionally and personally

(From OAAP)

Self-Test

❖ PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

[http://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL 5 English Self-Score 3-2012.pdf](http://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score_3-2012.pdf)



Small Groups – Ways Can Address Trauma

- Be Aware!
- Exercise
- Regular sleep
- Take breaks
- Ask for help
- Watch cat videos (or lawyers with cat filters)



Importance of Gratitude

